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E. P. Hammond

THE

Conversion of Children.

CAN IT BE EFFECTED? HOW YOUNG?
WILL THEY REMAIN STEADFAST? WHAT MEANS TO BE USED?
WHEN TO BE RECEIVED AND HOW TRAINED IN THE CHURCH?

BY
REV. EDWARD PAYSON HAMMOND, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "CHILDREN AND JESUS," "SKETCHES OF PALESTINE,"
"BETTER LIFE," "JESUS, THE LAMB OF GOD," "GATHERED
LAMBS," "GOLDEN GLEANINGS," "JESUS AND THE
LITTLE ONES," "THE CHILD'S GUIDE TO
HEAVEN," AM. ED. "THE BLOOD
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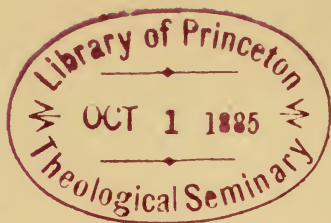
INTRODUCTION BY REV. J. E. RANKIN, D.D.,
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REPRINT OF ENGLISH EDITION.

*"Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such
is the kingdom of God."—LUKE xviii. 16.*

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Dedication.

TO THE MINISTERS, SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS AND CHRISTIAN
WORKERS WITH WHOM IT HAS BEEN OUR PRIVILEGE, IN
THIS COUNTRY AND GREAT BRITAIN, TO LABOR
WITH THE HELP OF GOD IN WINNING
THE LITTLE ONES TO JESUS,


This Volume is Affectionately Dedicated

BY

THE AUTHOR.



INTRODUCTION

HILDREN are converted, just as adults are. The child is father of the man. We love God because He first loved us. It is not philosophy that shows us that God has loved us, it is Christ Jesus, and Him crucified. This the child can see, even more clearly than the adult. The nearer we are to birth, the nearer are we to the new birth. The oldest, the wisest, has to enter Christ's kingdom as a little child. This not only means that he is to come in a child-like spirit, but also that the method of coming is the same: that is, that there is the same inward process.

I remember a child who heard a sermon addressed to adults on the text—"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." After service he took to his father a rude drawing of a kingly personage, knocking for admission at a closed door. The father saw the impression made by the truth, and kissing his son tenderly, said, "That is it, my boy, let Him in!" It is the philosophic Vinet who says of the Bible: "It is sometimes urged that this antique

and oriental book refuses to assimilate itself with the modern forms of thought. Without one aid of archæology the child understands the Bible as he does the talk of his playfellow. This language of the childhood of the nations, seems made for human children. The child does better than understand—these narratives are his delight. The Author of the Bible is our Master in this also. Who could have so well spread honey on the edge of this cup offered to all men, at the bottom of which childhood finds nothing bitter?"

Every child that is old enough to sin, is old enough to be conscious of sin ; and the consciousness of sin always prepares the way for the Saviour. And when a Saviour is presented, the child seizes hold of the idea, just as the man does. A drowning child will struggle for life, will catch at straws even, just as the man will. It would be a strange thing if, when so large a proportion of children die in infancy or childhood, the plan of salvation were so beyond their apprehension that they could not lay hold of it. God has done all. A man can add nothing to it. And when a child says :

" Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come,"

it means just as much as though said by a philosopher. It may mean more. For it often takes many

years, and many severe trials, to bring manhood back to spiritual childhood. One of the best definitions of faith once fell from the lips of one of these little ones. She was asked how she became a Christian. Her reply was, "I just took my heart to Jesus, and left it there."

It was not many months since that we received to our communion a lady who was converted in childhood at one of Mr. Hammond's meetings for children in the West. He could have no higher honor than this title—"Children's Evangelist." I think he deserves this title, if for nothing else, for his advocacy of the possibility of a child's conversion as against all evil hearts of unbelief. But, in addition to this, I believe there are multitudes of children, in this and other lands, who will rise up in heaven and call him blessed, because he taught them the way of life, through the blood of Christ.

I have read some of the advance slips of this book. To some of the facts I could myself attest. And I am very happy thus to associate my name with the author of it; so tenderly remembered as he is, in so many places, especially by the lambs of the Saviour's flock. And if there is any prayer of mine that could help him, I think it would be, that he may learn more and more of his Master how to feed these lambs. This prayer I offer, as I finish these words of introduction.

J. E. RANKIN.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Sept. 18th, 1877.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE FROM DR. A. H. BURLINGHAM.

PATERSON, N. J., Oct. 15, 1877.

REV. E. P. HAMMOND.

MY DEAR BRO. : From the depths of my heart I am thankful that you are about to publish a book upon the conversion of children. It is a subject of great importance and about which there ought to be no faithlessness. I can never cease to be grateful to you for your successful efforts in behalf of the children in St. Louis. Many children at that time came into the Second Baptist Church, of which I was then pastor, and the record as to durability and fidelity as Christians will compare more than favorably with that of any like number of adults I have ever received into any church. Let us save the children before they come to be hardened and gnarled.

Yours very sincerely,

A. H. BURLINGHAM,

Pastor First Baptist Church, Paterson, N. J.



PREFACE.

FOR nearly thirty years my attention has been especially directed to children. A large portion of my time has been spent among them.

I have been repeatedly asked to write out for adults a book embodying some of the results of my observations among the little ones. In doing so, I have reached beyond my own sphere of labour as much as possible for facts bearing upon the different points discussed, so that I might avoid the appearance of defending my own method of labour among the children.

Had it been possible, I should gladly have omitted *all* reference to the especial work to which I believe the Lord has called me.

And yet it is because of my experience in this direction that I have been asked to write this book.

The illustrations and incidents used are, I believe, from reliable sources.

I can but feel grateful to those whose prayers, with mine, are ascending to God, that His rich blessing may attend this humble effort, which has been put forth for His glory.

E. PAYSON HAMMOND.

VERNON, CONNECTICUT, U.S.A.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONVERSION OF CHILDREN.

PAGE

"Good children" in Sunday-school books—Establishment of Children's Special Service Mission—Opinions of ministers on the conversion of children—Special work among children—Revival at Musselburgh—Dr. Lindsay Alexander—His address at Glasgow—"Greetin' about his sins"—Dr. Joel Parker's address—Satan's devices—"I've lost my hat!"—Fifty anxious children—The Sunday-school superintendent—Children praying—The superintendent convinced—Matthew Henry—Meetings at Weston-super-Mare—"Because I love Jesus"—Offending the little ones . . . 1

CHAPTER II.

HOW EARLY MAY CHILDREN BE LED TO CHRIST?

Love for earthly parents—Bushnell's "Christian Nurture"—Converted children will be children still—"Train up a child in the way he should go"—Inconsistent parents—Mr. J. Denham Smith's meetings in Dublin—Cleansing the heart—"Ever since I was a little boy"—The Gospel about children—"Jesus wants 'um"—"Jesus of Nazareth passeth by"—The Gambler—Teachers should strive for immediate conversion—Little Eliza—Her father's letter 19

CHAPTER III.

WILL CHILDREN CONTINUE STEADFAST?

PAGE

When can we say children are really converted?—Personal experience—Dr. Prime's "Five Years of Prayer"—Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel—Revival at John Street Chapel, London—Dividing the converted from the unconverted—Children continuing steadfast—Letter from Dr. J. O. Fiske—Rev. William Taylor's work among children in Africa—Children's prayer meetings—"I've found Jesus!"—The force of example—Children suffering persecution—"I'll shoot you"—Obedience to parents—Rev. Dr. Todd—Dr. Campbell—The conversion of Phœbe Bartlett—Children's letters—The two sisters—A large number continue steadfast—Examples of early conversion among the early Christians—Hymn by a child	37
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

HOW CAN CHILDREN BE LED TO JESUS?

How to speak to children—The general address—Dealing with them individually—Rev. Robert McCheyne—Straying lambs . . .	63
---	----

CHAPTER V.

PREACHING TO CHILDREN.

the secret of successful preaching—Dr. Tyng—Counting the rafters—Securing the attention—Belief of the early Church—An address to children—The guide to heaven—The Maze at Hampton Court—The Catacombs—Lost in London—A boy's letter—What is a new heart?—From Gethsemane to Calvary—Going up without a guide—Lost in the snow—Frozen to death—A wonderful boy—Prayer—The Children's band—Rev. Newman Hall—Impressions not transitory	68
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

HOW EARLY MAY CONVERTED CHILDREN JOIN THE CHURCH?

ceeding the lambs—Obeying all Christ's commands—A child puzzling the pastor—Mr. Spurgeon—Dr. Shaw—Expecting too much—"A reason for the hope that is in them"—A children's Church—Rev. Richard Fuller—Dr. Henry Clay Fish—A great mistake—Little Martha—Your own little Mary—Christ and the little ones . . .	94
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHILDREN.

PAGE

Rowland W. Diller's narrative—Pointing me out—Freed from strong drink—"Don't you love him for that, father?"—Child influence in prayer—"Can't you pray for me?"—The gambler and his child—A deep thrust—Children at work for Christ—A child's faith—Carrie and her father—A mother led to Christ by her little boy—A child's words blessed—Praying children—Papa, how old are you?—A distillery broken up by a child's influence—A father and mother converted—The stowaway—The child and the infidel—The infidel lawyer—The little cripple	118
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

TESTIMONIES ABOUT THE WORK AND FROM CHILDREN THEMSELVES.

Children's Letters—Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel—"Bring them to Jesus"—Extract from "The Christian"—Letters—Child's faith in prayer—Letter from a blind child—Deaf and dumb children—"If I am not a saint, I am a sinner"—Speaking to children individually—Filled tumblers—Mr. John Sands—Persecution—Confidence in Christ—Struggle with Satan—The covenant—Eila's victory—The house of Refuge—Jacksonville Institution for Deaf and Dumb—"It's your last chance"—"Can't we have a prayer-meeting?"	132
---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

TESTIMONIES FROM MINISTERS.

Testimonies from Rev. C. H. Spurgeon—Rev. Ezra Tinker—Rev. Richard Newton—Rev. A. A. Bonar—Rev. Wm. S. Plumer—Dr. F. H. Helmer—Revival among the little ones—President P. A. Chadbourne—Rev. Dr. Pease—Rev. F. B. Shaw—Mr. William Reynolds—Rev. E. F. Hatfield—Rev. I. N. Carman	153
---	-----



THE CONVERSION OF CHILDREN.

CHAPTER I

THE CONVERSION OF CHILDREN.

"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN, AND FORBID THEM NOT, TO COME UNTO ME: FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

Matt. xix. 14.

FREQUENTLY, in my travels, I have held conversations something like the following with the children whom I have chanced to meet in the railway trains and elsewhere :

"Are you a Christian, my dear child?"

"No, sir."

"Would you not like to be one?"

"No, sir."

"What! not like to be a Christian, and love the dear Saviour, and so go home to heaven when you die?"

"No, sir."

"Why not, may I ask?"

"Because, when I have read of the conversion of children in our Sunday-school books, I have found that they all die not very long after their conversion; and I do not want to die now; I want to live to grow up. I am almost sure I should die if I were to become a Christian, for I

never heard or read of any children who were converted as young as I am, who lived to grow up to be men and women."

It is perfectly astonishing how this idea has prevailed among children all over the land where our Sunday-school books are read. I believe that a vast number of books of this kind are doing far more harm than they are doing good.

Many grown-up people, as well as children, have almost intuitively come to have the same idea of the probability of the early death of Christian children.

Others, again, believe it is possible for children to be converted, one here and another there ; but that it is hopeless to expect that a great number of children in any Sunday-school, or church, or community, will be regenerated by the power of God, and saved in early childhood from a life of sin.

I thank God that President Edwards had the boldness to write an account of the conversion of PHŒBE BARTLETT when only four years of age. I have no doubt many thought him very injudicious, and in danger of spoiling the child. Very likely there was some such danger ; but is there not more danger in the direction to which I have alluded ?

Last winter, in Syracuse, New York, I met the granddaughter of this same Phœbe Bartlett, an earnest Christian lady, who related to me the account of the conversion of her grandmother. So Phœbe Bartlett certainly did not die in childhood, for she lived to be seventy years of age.*

One object in writing this book has been the hope of doing away with the erroneous impression to which we have referred, that converted children die young ; and to encourage God's people to labour earnestly for the salvation of the little ones in large numbers, not only in their own families, but in

* See pages 53 55.

Sunday-schools and in meetings specially held for the purpose. As the result of our visit to London in 1867-8, the CHILDREN'S SPECIAL SERVICE MISSION was inaugurated ; and it has continued now for ten years to carry on the work among children in different parts of Great Britain.

Many of those who are well adapted to the labour of winning children to Christ have connected themselves with this Mission. Year after year, in the different parts of Great Britain and on the continent of Europe, they have toiled on, carrying out the plan of labour to which reference will be made in these pages ; and it is safe to say that hundreds, if not thousands, have by them been led to Christ. This Mission has its annual meetings, printed reports, and its organization is as permanent as that of the American Home Missionary Society.

During His life on earth, the Lord Jesus said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not" (Luke xviii. 16). But can it be said in this our day that any great anxiety is manifested concerning the salvation of children? Are children in very large numbers brought to Christ? We fear it is too evident that they are not ; and the reason no doubt is, that many Christians have no correct views upon the subject. They may admit that it is possible for one here and another there, some specially precocious child, to be born into the fold of Christ, but that they may be brought in in great numbers they do not believe. Certainly it would be strange if men should practically aim at what they have no faith in being able to accomplish.

We cannot be too thankful for the Sunday-schools, which have accomplished a great work among the children. But are not many parents and teachers satisfied with giving mental instruction, hoping that at some future time the seed sown will spring up and bear fruit ; not realizing that those

under their charge are exposed to the shafts of death every hour? And is it not true of a child, as of a man, that except he be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God?

Dr. Dwight, for twenty-one years President of Yale College, in his two sermons on "Religious Education," speaking of the desirability of labouring for the early conversion of children, says:

"The conscience is, at this period, exceedingly tender and susceptible, readily alarmed by the apprehension of guilt, and prepared to contend or fly at the approach of a known temptation. All the affections also are easily moved, and are fit to retain permanently, and often indelibly, whatever impressions are made. The heart is soft, gentle, and easily won, strongly attached by kindness, and peculiarly to the parents themselves. To every amiable, every good thing, it is drawn, comparatively without trouble or resistance, and united by bonds which no future art or force can dissolve. Against every odious and bad thing its opposition is with equal ease excited and rendered permanent." *

Rev. John Todd says: "When can the conscience be reached, if not in childhood? When has God promised that the soul *shall* find Him, if not when He is sought early? When will the Holy Spirit impress the heart which you are labouring to subdue, if not when it is the heart of a child?"

Dr. Irenæus Prime, in his "Five Years of Prayer," says: "One of the characteristics of the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the churches in these latter days, and one which proves the blessing to be from the same Spirit that indited the pages of the Divine Word, is to be found in the fact that 'the hearts of fathers are turned to their children' in seeking, and praying, and looking, for their conversion.

* Dwight's *Theology*, vol. v. p. 131.

There has been a great want of faith in this respect on the part of the Church. Children—those of tender years—have been too much regarded, and treated, as if they were not capable of conversion; as if the Spirit of God must leave them, amid all the perils that surround them, until they have arrived at maturity; but this feeling is passing away. This unbelief, which limits the Holy One of Israel, is giving way to better views and stronger faith. The instances of early piety, and of youthful devotion to the service of Christ, are so many and so truthful, that none can doubt.”

For thirty years it has been my privilege to labour directly for the conversion of children.

Though but a boy when I was first led to know the “truth as it is in Jesus,” I began at once to work among the little ones. Nothing made me so happy as to see children giving evidence of having experienced a change of heart through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

During my preparatory collegiate and theological course, I was in the habit of holding meetings in adjacent cities and villages, with the direct object of leading the young as well as the old to Christ.

Thus many interesting facts with regard to the conversion of children have naturally come to my knowledge. I have been repeatedly asked to gather those facts into a book, which, with God’s blessing, would strengthen the faith of His people, especially of parents and Sunday-school teachers, and lead them to labour immediately for the salvation of the little ones, as much and even more than if they had spent many years in sin.

While in Edinburgh, in 1859, I became acquainted with the Rev. Dr. W. Lindsay Alexander, a man of great learning and influence. A letter of introduction to him from his old friend, Dr. Thomas H. Skinner, of New York,

induced him to send me down to Musselburgh, to supply the pulpit, while pursuing my studies in the Free Church College.

I there found some earnest, praying Christians, who desired to see sinners converted. Ere long, in answer to their supplications, the power of God's Spirit was manifested, and many children and adults were asking what they should do to be saved.

Dr. Alexander became somewhat alarmed lest the work should not be genuine. He attended one of the services, but refused to remain in the inquiry meeting, where many were seeking the way of life. Though he had himself preached that night a most excellent sermon, yet this *individual* work was something new to him; he therefore passed on to the vestry for his hat and overcoat.

The church that night was so crowded that many of the children could not get in. They therefore held a meeting in the adjoining room, where Dr. Alexander had left his hat.

Humanly speaking, my future history was influenced by that meeting of children. For ten years I had fully purposed being a missionary in Bulgaria, but the work of that evening directed my life into another channel.

Through the influence of that one meeting in that little room, as it will soon be seen, Dr. Alexander was led to realize that the work was of God. He published lengthy accounts of it, which led to my remaining two and a half years in Great Britain, and thus to my devoting my life to "do the work of an evangelist."

At the annual meeting of the Congregational Union at Glasgow, in May, 1860, he delivered an address giving a full account of the work, from which I make an extract:

"What I am about to state has been found interesting to Christian people in other places, and I have no doubt it will be found interesting to every Christian present this

evening. I will give expression to one or two feelings that have been excited in my mind with regard to the Musselburgh meeting.

"The first thing that struck me in going out was the increased number of attendants. I went out upon a week evening, and preached in a place where I hardly ever saw a full house upon the Sabbath, and found myself called on to address a congregation that crowded the place from wall to wall, and even filled up the steps leading to the pulpit. That struck me as very remarkable, and it immediately satisfied my mind that some very great work was going on there.

"Another thing that struck me very much was the multitude of young persons, of children, who were in the meeting, and who seemed interested in the work. I confess I had something of an unbelieving state of mind on that subject. Having never come in contact myself with anything of the kind, I frankly confess I had not just the same cordial belief in the conversion of very young children as I have now. I happened to leave my great-coat in one of the small vestries. When I went to the door for it, I found it bolted. I was going to retire, when the door opened, and a very little girl appeared. I asked if there was anybody in. She said, 'Yes, sir.' Whispering, I said, 'I was going in for my great-coat, but I will not disturb you; but who is here?' She said, 'A wheen o' us lassies.' I said, 'I will not go in then; could you get me my coat?' She said, 'It's here, sir; but I canna get up to't.' I was going away, when she said, 'You might come in.' So I went in, and there I found (I forget exactly how many) little girls upon their knees, and one of them was engaged in prayer. Whether she had overheard us talking at the door, or supposed that some person had come in, I do not know; but her voice faltered, and she concluded very

quickly, so that I hardly heard her. But directly she had concluded, another little girl began to pray, and a very simple, very childlike, but very beautiful prayer it was. *I stood listening to that child's prayer, and the tears started in my eyes as I listened. I could not help it. I felt that I was reproved ; that I had doubted the work of God in that particular, and now He had brought me face to face with the work itself!* When she had concluded her little, simple prayer, they all rose up, and very abashed the poor little things looked when they saw I was standing in the midst of them.

"I began to talk to this little girl who had been engaged in prayer, and I said to her, after I had reassured her a little, 'Well now, I heard you thanking God for pardoning your sins, and for the peace of mind you have ; I suppose you feel that you have been converted.' And she said, 'Yes, sir,' with great quietness, and great assurance of mind. I said, 'Now, how did that come to pass? You did not always think of these things.' 'Oh no !' she said, 'I never cared about them at all.' 'Well,' I said, 'just tell me how it came to pass that you did come to care about them.' She said, 'I came to the Meetings, and attended them for awhile ; but I did not care much about what was going on. One night I went, with some others, into a room. There were a good many women there, and some of them were greetin' about their sins. A lady was present who spoke to them, told them about their sins, and told them how they were to get pardon ; and,' she added, in her simple sort of way, 'the thought just came into my mind that I was a sinner, too.' I said, 'And did you go away with that thought?' 'Yes,' she replied. I said, 'Did that grieve you?' Looking up in my face with a most earnest and striking expression, she said, 'Eh, sir, I was in an awfu' way !' In this state he continued, she said, for 'good while. I asked, 'How did you find peace of mind a

'Oh, sir,' she replied, 'it was something that Mr. Hammond said when he was preaching.' I asked, 'What gave you peace of mind?' Turning on me again the same intense and earnest look, she exclaimed, 'Oh, there is nothing *can* give peace of mind to the sinner but the blood that was shed on Calvary.' Now, I just put it to any experienced minister, if such a statement does not show that this child knows the way of salvation, and if it does not afford evidence that she has experienced the grace of God in truth. For my own part, all my doubts and unbelieving suspicions were gone.

"I may just mention, that as this talk was going on, there was a little boy in the corner of the room, so little a fellow that he had just emerged from the condition of petticoats, and had not reached the dignity of a jacket; his whole costume being in one piece from his neck to the heels. He was standing in the corner of the room, and sobbing very hard. The only idea that came into my mind was that the little fellow was sleepy, and that he wanted to go home, as it was now about ten o'clock. I said to one of the girls that he was wearied, and that some one had better take him home. She said, 'Oh, no, sir; he is not wearied, he is greetin' about his sins.' I went to the little fellow, and I spoke to him; however, he was really past speaking to. He was in a state of great distress, whatever was the cause. I said to one of the girls, 'Perhaps you could speak to him better than I could;' and she replied, 'Well, yes, sir; I will speak to him, but he does not belong to this place.' I said, 'Indeed!' 'No, puir fellow; he has walked all the way frae Prestonpans to-night.' Now this was a dark, wintry night, and yet this little creature had walked, by himself, about four miles, to get to the Meeting. I asked about him the last time I was out. This little girl told me that *she* believed he was going on in the right way.

"This was a very striking instance to me : and I was struck, also, with the manifestation of a kindly interest in him on the part of his juvenile companions. I said, 'This poor little fellow cannot go home at this time of night.' 'Oh,' said one of the little ones, 'I'll no let him gang hame ; I'll tak' him hame with me.' This seemed to me as like the time of the beginning of the Gospel at Jerusalem, when they had all things in common, and every man received into his house those from a distance who were converted to the truth.

"Several persons went down to Musselburgh from Edinburgh. Among them was a female servant. She entered into conversation with one of the little girls, who immediately began to preach Christ to her as the Saviour, to the utter amazement and astonishment of this woman. She said to her, 'Lassie, where did you learn this?' After a little while, the little girl, to her still further astonishment, said, 'If you will kneel down, I will pray with you.' And to use the woman's own words, 'she just drappit down on her knees, and I couldna but gang down too!' And the little girl prayed ; and the woman, strongly moved, when they rose up, exclaimed, 'Lassie, wha ever learned you to pray?' The child's answer was, 'Naebody learned me ; I think the Lord just pits't into me.' That was the means of that woman's conversion ; and she is now one who gives evidence of being really converted."

We are warned in God's Word not to be ignorant of Satan's devices. We read in Job, that upon a certain day the sons of God came together, and Satan came also among them. I well remember walking through the streets of Rome with two friends, when one of them remarked, "The devil is very busy here." This was the answer : "Oh, no ; he has his own way here in Rome ; he is away in America and Scotland, where God is pouring out His Spirit,

and where sinners are escaping from his dominion. It is there that he is concentrating his power." It is an alarming thought that he who, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," is on the alert when sinners, and especially children, are fleeing to Christ; for he well knows that if he can keep the children away from Him until sin hath dominion over them, he has far more prospect of retaining his hold upon them through time and through eternity.

To illustrate this, let me give one fact which occurred in Newark, New Jersey, where it was officially reported, after the revival in 1864, that something over a thousand joined the Church from the Sunday-school. The venerable Dr. Joel Parker, for many years pastor of one of the leading churches of New York City, known as a very conservative man, both in politics and religion, arose in one of the morning meetings in Dr. Henry Clay Fisher's church, and spoke as follows :

"The longer I live, the more I believe in the devil. At the very commencement of these meetings he came near upsetting me. At the first Children's Meeting held in my church, Mr. Hammond at the close of the address went down among the children and began to talk with every one with whom he came in contact. Many were in tears. Finally, he returned to the pulpit, and taking me by the hand, said, 'Dr. Parker, this is the work of God's Spirit. Won't you come and speak to some of the children?' I had very grave doubts about the matter. 'These children are under deep conviction,' he added, 'won't you go and point them to Christ? You can see they are weeping for their sins.' I determined not to heed his *ipse dixit*, but to test the thing for myself before I went to work in the inquiry meeting. I therefore surveyed the strange scene for a little while, and finally selected one boy that was

weeping more bitterly, and was, apparently, in more deep feeling than any of the rest. Instead of saying to him, 'I am glad to find you anxious about your soul,' I slowly approached him, and said:

"What are you weeping so for, my little boy?"

"Fresh tears burst from his eyes as he exclaimed:

"I've lost my hat! I've lost my hat!"

"The devil seemed," continued Dr. Parker, "to be standing in almost visible form by my side, saying, 'Yes, that is it! One boy has lost his hat, and that is all *he* is crying for. Those around him are crying out of sympathy; and here you, a minister of the Gospel, are being led into this nonsense, making a fool of yourself. You had better go back to the platform and maintain your dignity. By so doing you will continue to hold the respect of yourself and your neighbours.'

"I was about to turn upon my heel, when the words, 'Be not ignorant of his devices' (2 Cor. ii. 11) occurred to me. I therefore determined not to be frightened so easily. By the side of this boy was another, also weeping bitterly. I questioned him as to the cause of his tears. His reply was, 'Oh, I feel that I have been a great sinner not to love that dear Saviour who died on the cross for me, of whom I have heard so much to-day. It seems to me I never can be forgiven, my heart is so hard.' I believe that I talked with at least fifty that day under deep conviction of sin, and I rejoice to know that numbers of them belong to my own Sunday-school. I have watched over them, and I believe that most of them are to-day giving evidence of having experienced a blessed change of heart.

"Oh, how glad the Evil One would have been to have prejudiced me against the work at the very start, and so kept me from entering into it with all my might; and what a good excuse I should have had, not on' for keeping myself,

but others, from entering into this work of God. How easily I might have said to the ministers the next day, when asked what I thought of the Meeting, 'It is all a sham ; they were crying, but none of them knew what they were crying for. I went down into the inquiry meeting myself. I deliberately sought to find those who were said to be under the deepest conviction. I found one boy weeping more bitterly, if possible, than the rest. I asked him what was the matter. His laconic reply was, "*I have lost my hat !*" I was at once satisfied the whole thing was a sham ; that it would be time enough to labour for the conversion of children when they knew the difference between tears shed on account of the conviction of sin, and those shed over *the loss of a hat !*"

I have often been struck with the fact, that at the commencement of a series of Meetings specially for children, those whom we expected would be most ready to enter into the work, are the very persons who seem to keep aloof. The Lord only knows how many bitter tears I have shed as I have from time to time realized this fact.

In 1862, a superintendent of one of the leading Sunday-schools in Brooklyn, N.Y., whose pastor at that time preached to the largest congregation, I think, with one exception, approached me at the close of a meeting in Dr. Hatfield's church, New York, with an invitation to come to Brooklyn and hold some meetings. He stated that Dr. Buddington and others were ready to unite in the work. He brought with him letters from several pastors, and in a few days the matter was arranged. The superintendent seemed to be very much in earnest, ready to do all in his power to forward the work. Numerous young converts and earnest Christians in the Church where I was labouring promised to pray earnestly that God would manifest His mighty power in the salvation of souls.

At the very first Meeting, at which there were over two

thousand present, there was a power beyond that of man plainly visible moving upon the hearts of the people. Many children were in tears. I was the guest of the superintendent. When I returned home his wife said to him :

“My dear, I did not see you at work in the inquiry meeting. The children were weeping for their sins. Many more helpers were needed. I am sure many expected that you, being a superintendent, would be working among those who were inquiring for the way of life.”

“I have no faith in this work among the children,” he replied. “I think that they were merely weeping at some of the very touching stories they had heard. I do not believe they knew anything about the conviction of sin experimentally.”

“But you would have believed so,” said his wife, “if you had gone among the children as I did.”

“I have no wish to do so,” was the reply. “I do not believe in this way of doing things.”

So he continued for three days. We had long arguments together, and though he attended the meeting each day, he seemed to grow severely censorious. There I was, a guest in his house, and he all the time blind to the great work which God, by His Holy Spirit, was carrying on in the hearts of many of the children and youth. About the fourth day of the meetings, as he was passing across one corner of the inquiry meeting, down in the aisle right before him he found two little girls, one of them weeping bitterly. Said the weeping child to the other :

“Oh, I am such a sinner, how can God ever forgive me ?”

“I felt just so too, last Monday,” the other replied ; “but one of the Christians talked and prayed with me, and pointed me to Jesus ; and as I myself prayed to Him, He showed me His bleeding hands and wounded side, until I

saw and felt that He had truly loved me and given Himself for me ; and I could not help loving Him ; so I gave my heart to Him, and have been a happy little girl ever since, trying to get all my friends to come to Him ; and now if you will bow your head, you too can come to Jesus, and be as happy as I am."

They did pray together, and oh, such an earnest prayer ! it was enough to melt the hardest heart. We both stood and listened. Suddenly I saw my tall friend, the superintendent, quivering like an aspen leaf. That little girl praying with her friend was his daughter, who had been converted since the first meeting ; and while her father had been cavilling about the work, she had been leading souls to Christ. He turned, and, seizing me by the hand, said, "Can you forgive me ? Can God forgive me ?"

From that hour he enlisted in the work, and when Sunday came, he found that sixty-three of his Sunday-school scholars were giving evidence of having experienced a change of heart. That superintendent was a good man. I loved him. Though my heart was grieved and I shed many tears over him, I was not angry with him because he did not understand the blessed work of God's Spirit. He has since gone home to glory, and will no doubt meet upon the shining shore many of his scholars who were at that time truly born again.

In Matthew xviii. 2, we read : "Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth Me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it

were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

This last verse is equivalent to saying, Whoso shall put a stumbling-block in the way of one of these little ones which believe in Me, etc.

I am especially thankful for these four words: "which believe in Me."

Are we not thus distinctly taught from God's own Word that little children can intelligently believe in Christ?

I am ready to admit that the term "little children" often refers to young converts, though they may be old in years; but the connection here would, it seems to me, lead us to believe that our Saviour refers directly to little children as such.

Matthew Henry says: "The tender regard Christ has to His Church, extends itself to every particular member. Not only to the whole family, but to every child of the family. The less they are in themselves to whom we show kindness, the more there is of good will in it to Christ; the less it is for their sakes, the more it is for His, and He takes it accordingly. Our Saviour warns all people, as they will answer it at their peril, not to put any stumbling-block in the way of one of His little ones."

In the year 1868, it was my privilege to hold a series of meetings in Weston-super-Mare, at the invitation of Lord Cavan, Rev. R. G. Walker, and others.

Towards the close of the first meeting, I carefully dwelt for some time upon the proofs of a saving change of heart, giving them five scriptural evidences; namely, LOVE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE; LOVE FOR THE BIBLE; LOVE FOR PRAYER; LOVE FOR THE SAVIOUR; and a DESIRE TO SEE OTHERS CONVERTED. I dwelt upon these carefully, illustrating each point. I then said, at the close of the address, "You who

feel that you have lately become Christians, and that you have those five evidences of a change of heart, can do one of three things: you can go to your homes, if you choose; or you can remain at the inquiry meeting and talk with your little friends who are anxious; or you can come up on the platform and sing. Lest any of you should come on the platform because others come, or simply because you love to sing, I shall request the Rev. R. G. Walker, a clergyman of the Episcopal Church, and Lord Cavan, carefully to examine each one of you, and not to allow any of you to go upon the platform unless you can 'give a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.'"

The work soon after began, and I went down among the anxious. Once, as I returned to the platform, I found that the Rev. R. G. Walker had just allowed to go upon it a little fellow who did not seem to be over four years of age. I asked him why he put such a *little* fellow upon the platform. His calm answer was, "Because I believe he is a Christian." "It may be," said I; "but he is too young to go up on that platform. It will make talk among the conservative people. They will say we are putting babes up there. It will do more harm than good." "But," said he, "I was requested to allow those children, and those only, who could give evidence of having experienced a change of heart, to go up, and I have examined that little boy, and I think he is a Christian." "It may be," said I; "but we must have some respect for the feelings of those Christians who are looking on." "You can take him off," said he, "if you please, but I cannot conscientiously."

I blush to record the fact that I said to the little fellow, "What are you on this platform for?" His quick reply was, "Because I love Jesus." "I am glad if you do; but it is now nearly eight o'clock, and it is time such a little boy as you were at home. Now run away," I said, as I lifted

him from the edge of the platform and turned his face towards the door. He burst into tears, but, like an obedient boy, pressed his way out. Just at that moment a Christian lady who heard all this touched my arm and asked, "Do you know that boy?" "No," was my reply; "I only know that I thought he was too young to be upon the platform with the young converts." "If you had heard him pray," said she, "as *I* did last night, you would not so cruelly have put him from the platform and sent him home crying." It seemed at that instant as if I could hear my Saviour saying unto me, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea;" and I said, "O Lord, if I may but be forgiven this once, I will never again act so cruelly. With Thy help, never again shall the fear of man under like circumstances bring a snare to my soul."

It is a delightful thought, and in full accordance with the teachings of God's Word, that when you and I, dear reader, enter the realms of Paradise, we shall meet multitudes upon multitudes who were converted in childhood. Let us hope that some of these will have been saved through our instrumentality.



CHAPTER II.

HOW EARLY MAY CHILDREN BE LED TO CHRIST?

"THEY BROUGHT YOUNG CHILDREN ["LITTLE CHILDREN," *Matthew*;
"INFANTS," *Luke*] TO HIM . . . AND HE . . . BLESSED THEM."

Mark x. 13, 16.

THE question is often asked—At how early an age can children experimentally understand the way of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? It may not be easy to give a definite answer to this question; but I have found in many parts of the world eminent Christians who experienced a change of heart at such an early age that they could not remember the time when they first began to love God. I firmly believe that it is possible for Christian parents and Sabbath-school teachers of infant classes so to hold up Christ before little children, even of only three, four, and five summers, that their young hearts will be drawn I might say almost involuntarily, to Him.

A mother in England taught her little child that his father was away in India. As soon as he could lisp his father's name, his picture was shown him, and he was taught to say, "That's my papa." Though he had never seen his father to know him, yet, through that mother's faithful teaching, he learned to love him. One day, unexpectedly to all, the father returned from India, and as he

entered the hall door, his little son was the first to greet him, exclaiming as he did so, "My dear papa, I so glad to see you." Why is it not possible for mothers, therefore, so to bring home to their little ones the great fact of Jesus' love for them, that their young hearts will be drawn to Him at such an early age that they will never be able to remember the time when the light of the Sun of Righteousness first dawned upon them? Then might they be enabled truly to say of Christ, "In whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice." (1 Pet. i. 8.)

It is not enough simply to tell children that Jesus has loved them and died for them. They must first be led to see and to feel that we really love Him ourselves, that He is to us a personal Friend and Saviour. Then, and not till then, will our words reach their hearts.

Dr. Horace Bushnell, in his book on "Christian Nurture," holds the theory to which we have alluded. Some persons have misunderstood this work, and supposed that he intended to teach that children were not by nature sinful, and did not need the regenerating influences of God's Spirit, that they might experience a saving change of heart. A few years before he died I met him at his home in Hartford, Connecticut, and questioned him upon this point. His answer was, "I believe that every child of Adam is a sinner, and in need of forgiveness, and of a divinely wrought change of heart; and I believe that it is alone through the death of Christ that this change can be effected." He also says:

"The aim and effort and expectation should be, not, as is commonly assumed, that the child is to grow up in sin, and to be converted after he comes to a mature age; but that he is to open on the world as one who is spiritually renewed, not remembering the time when he went through a technical experience, but seeming rather to have loved what is good from his earliest years.

"This doctrine is not a novelty, now rashly and for the first time propounded. It is as old as the Christian Church, and prevails extensively at the present day in other parts of the world. Neither let your own experience raise a prejudice against it. If you have endeavoured to realize the very truth I here affirm, but find that your children do not exhibit the character you have looked for; if they seem to be intractable to religious influences, and sometimes to display an apparent aversion to the very subject of religion itself, you are not, of course, to conclude that the doctrine I here maintain is untrue or impracticable.

"You may be unreasonable in your expectations of your children.

"Possibly there may be seeds of holy principle in them which you do not discover.

"A child acts out his present feelings, the feelings of the moment, without qualification or disguise. And how would *you* appear, many times, if you were to do the same?

'Will you expect of them to be better and more constant and consistent than yourselves; or will you not rather expect them to be children, human children still, living a mixed life, trying out the good and evil of the world, and preparing, as older Christians do, when they have taken a lesson of sorrow and emptiness, to turn again to the true good?

"Perhaps they will go through a rough mental struggle, at some future day, and seem, to others and to themselves, there to have entered on a Christian life. And yet it may be true that there was still some root of right principle established in their childhood, which is here only quickened and developed, as when Christians of a mature age are revived in their piety, after a period of spiritual lethargy; for it is conceivable that regenerate character may exist, long before it is fully and formally developed."

Again, Dr. Bushnell says: "Children have been so trained as never to remember the time when they began to be religious. Baxter was, at one time, greatly troubled concerning himself, because he could recollect no time when there was a gracious change in his character. But he discovered, at length, that 'education is as properly a means of grace as preaching,' and thus found a sweeter comfort in his love to God, that he learned to love Him so early. The European churches, generally, regard Christian piety more as a habit of life formed under the training of childhood, and less as a marked spiritual change in experience.

"The Moravian Brethren, it is agreed by all, give as ripe and graceful an exhibition of piety as any body of Christians living on the earth, and it is the radical distinction of their system that it rests its power on Christian education. They make their churches schools of holy nurture to childhood, and expect their children to grow up there, as plants in the house of the Lord. Accordingly it is affirmed that not one in ten of the members of that church recollects any time when he began to be religious. Is it then incredible that what has been can be?

"God does expressly lay upon us to expect that our children will grow up in piety under the parental nurture, and assumes the possibility that such a result may ordinarily be realized. 'Train up a child'—how? for future conversion? No, but 'in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' If it be said that this relates only to outward habits of virtue and vice, not to spiritual life, I reply, the Old Testament does not raise that distinction, as it is raised in the New. It puts all good together, all evil together, and regards a child trained up in the way he should go, as going in all the ways, and fulfilling all the ideas of virtue.

"The phraseology of the New Testament carries the

same import : 'Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord' (Eph. vi. 4), a form of expression which indicates the existence of a divine nurture, that is to encompass the child and mould him unto God ; so that he shall be brought up, as it were, in Him.

"A time is foretold, as our churches generally believe, when all shall know God, even from the least to the greatest ; that is, shall spiritually know Him ; or so that there shall be no need of exhorting one another to know Him ; for intellectual knowledge is not carried by exhortation. If such a time is ever to come, then at least children are to grow up in Christ. Can it come too soon ? And if we have the opinion that any such thing is impossible, either we, or those who come after us, must get rid of it. A principal reason why the great expectations of the future, that we in this age are giving out so confidently, seem only visionary and idle dreams to many, is that we are perpetually assuming their impossibility ourselves. One theory of religion is, that men are to grow up in evil, and be dragged into the Church of God by conquest. The world is to lie in halves, and the kingdom of God is to stretch itself side by side with the kingdom of darkness, making sallies into it, and taking captive those who are sufficiently hardened and bronzed in guiltiness to be converted."

Dr. Bushnell further asks :

"Why it is, if our doctrine be true, that many persons, remarkable for their piety, have been so unfortunate in their children ? Because, I answer, many persons remarkable for their piety, are yet very disagreeable persons, and that, too, by reason of some very marked defect in their religious character. They display just that spirit, and act in just that manner, which is likely to make religion odious—the more odious the more urgently they commend it. Sometimes they appear well to the world one remove distant from

them ; they shine well in their written biography ; but one living in their family will know what others do not, and, if their children turn out badly, will never be at a loss for the reason. Many persons, too, have such defective views of the manner of teaching appropriate to early childhood, that they really discourage their children. ‘Fathers, provoke not your children,’ says Paul, ‘lest they be discouraged’ (Col. iii. 21) ; implying that there is such a thing as encouraging, and such a thing as discouraging good principle and piety in a child. And there are other ways of discouraging children besides provoking them to an angry and wounded feeling by harsh treatment.”

Now, some might infer from these teachings of Dr. Bushnell that he would naturally oppose labouring for the salvation of children in masses, especially in revivals of religion. I remember, however, the time when he invited Dr. Finney to his church in Hartford to hold a series of meetings, and laboured earnestly with him in union meetings. I am not surprised, therefore, that near the close of his discourses on “Christian Nurture,” he uses the following language :

“Let us turn now, not away from revivals of religion, certainly not away from the conviction that God will bring upon the churches tides of spiritual exercise, and vary His Divine culture by times and seasons suited to their advancement ; but let us turn to inquire whether there is not a fund of increase in the very bosom of the Church itself. Let us try if we may not train up our children in the way that they should go. Simply this, if we can do it, will make the Church multiply her numbers manyfold more rapidly than now, with the advantage that many more will be gained from without than now.”

It seems to me that every candid Christian must admit

the positions which Dr. Bushnell assumes in his discourses on "Christian Nurture," at least those which I have quoted. A fact occurs to my mind which bears upon the subject of this chapter.

When Mr. J. Denham Smith was holding a series of meetings in the Metropolitan Hall in Dublin, his own little boy about four years of age was very much interested, and deeply convicted of his sinfulness. He was very fond of singing, as were all the members of his father's family. One evening after they returned from the children's meeting, his mother and sisters gathered around the piano and began to sing some of their familiar hymns, when his voice mingled with the rest. Though so young, he had caught many of the refrains and could join in them most heartily. Finally, they came to the hymn which he had often heard the great congregation sing, commencing,

"Now I have found a Friend, Jesus is mine ;
His love shall never end, Jesus is mine."

Though all the rest of the family present united in singing these words, his little lips were closed ; at length he said, "Please, mamma, don't sing that hymn ; Jesus is not mine yet." When his father returned they told him of it, but he replied, "Willie is too young to understand these things. After tea we will sing some more hymns, and bring in the one he objected to." They did so, and Willie again remonstrated, exclaiming, "Mamma, didn't I ask you not to sing that hymn ? Jesus is not mine yet. I cannot sing it." The father was surprised, but still said nothing. Next morning, Willie did not come down to breakfast. After waiting for him some time, his father went upstairs, and there found him kneeling down by his bed, engaged in prayer. When the door opened he arose, and in the most earnest manner asked, "Papa, when is the next children's

meeting?" Being told that it would be on Friday, he said, "Won't you ask them to pray for me, that the Holy Spirit may go *up and down in my heart*, so that I can with the rest sing, 'Now I have found a Friend, Jesus is mine'?"

At the next children's meeting Willie was present, drinking in every word. At the close he pressed his way to his father's side, and putting his hand in his, he said, "Now, dear papa, I can sing with the rest, 'Now I have found a Friend, Jesus is mine!'"

From that time this little boy lived a consistent Christian life. Nine years after, when I was holding meetings in that same hall, that boy, then thirteen years of age, was present. Though I knew well his early history, I asked him if he was a Christian. He said he had reason to believe that he was. I then asked him when it was that he first began to love the Saviour. His quick, decisive answer was, "It seems to me that I always loved Him. I cannot remember the time when I first felt His love in my heart." And yet there was no doubt of the hour when he was so enabled to view the loving Jesus bleeding on Calvary's cross for him, when his heart went out in love and consecration, and the Spirit of God said to him, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." God grant that every reader of this book may often hear the Saviour's words ringing in his ears, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

In 1874, at the close of the "union meetings" in St. Louis, twenty-one people—earnest Christians—among whom were several ministers and their wives, went with me on an evangelistic journey of nearly 2100 miles, to Galveston, passing through Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, the Indian Territory, and Kansas. At a Children's Meeting in Galveston, the wife of one of these ministers related a

touching story in regard to the conversation of her little boy, scarcely four years of age. One day he came running to her, and with a face betokening great sorrow, he said :

“Mamma, I said a naughty word; I swore, I did.”

“Did you?” she said ; “come here then, and I will get some clean water, and a rag, and some soap, and wash your mouth out.”

She then carefully went to work and washed his mouth out thoroughly, after which she pressed her finger down into his throat, and the little fellow felt half-choked. He said :

“What are you doing that for, mamma?”

“Because I want to get down into your heart, and wash your heart out; but I see that I can’t do that, so you will have to ask God to do that for you.”

“How can God do it?”

“I do not know; He does not tell me.”

“I know it came from the heart, mamma, because I *thought* the naughty word before I *said* it. But will He wash out my heart if I ask Him, mamma?”

“Yes, He will; He promises to do so.”

“Then I will ask Him.”

Away he went to his little room, and kneeling down, he said, “O God, I said a naughty word; I swore, I did; mamma has washed my mouth out, but she can’t wash my heart out. O God, please wash my heart out, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.”

By many this will be regarded as a childish affair, never to be thought of again by the little one; but this calm, judicious mother, whose name I can give to any who may desire it, said to a crowded church in Galveston, “That boy has been changed from that day. I believe he became a Christian from that hour, and he has lived a Christian life

ever since. His twin brother looks so much like him, I can scarcely tell them apart, and yet they are totally different from each other in their spiritual life. One is a Christian and the other is not. I see the proof of this over and over again in their every-day life."

This child was not four years of age.

At one of the Children's Meetings in the Metropolitan Hall in Dublin, Miss Bewley found in the inquiry meeting a little boy who did not appear to be more than five years of age. When she came to speak to this little fellow about his soul, she found that he was indulging a hope in Christ, and supposing that he was one of the young converts, asked him how long it was since he had learned to love the precious Saviour. His quick reply was: "Oh, I have loved Him EVER SINCE I WAS A LITTLE BOY!" "But," said she, "you are only a little boy now." She was about to remonstrate with him for having given such an answer, thinking he did not realize the nature of a change of heart, experimentally, when suddenly a tall man who had been looking on, in a confident manner said, "That is my boy. He has been a Christian for at least two years; and about the best Christian too in our house."

The early faith here illustrated, kindled in the heart at so tender an age, and burning so brightly and steadily, we know was John the Baptist's, who was "filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb" (Luke i. 15). It may have been Timothy's, of whom Paul says, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. iii. 15); the same "unfeigned faith . . . which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice" (2 Tim. i. 5). Such, too, was the little Samuel's, who "ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod" (1 Sam. ii. 18); and such, perhaps,

was the peaceful experience of Isaac, the child of promise. And how grateful to God must have been the offerings of such youthful hearts.

Let those who suppose children must arrive at maturity before they can become Christians, look carefully into the New Testament for light on this subject. They will find that there is no class of believers so particularly mentioned by our Lord as children. Three of the evangelists have recorded, what a little girl on hearing it read called "the child's gospel" (Mark x. 13-16):

"They brought young children

[Matthew says, "little children;" Luke calls them "infants"]

"to Him, that He should touch them :

[Matthew says, "that He should put His hands on them and pray:"]

"and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it He was much displeased,

[Luke says, "Jesus called them unto Him,"]

"and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them" (Matt. xix. 13-15 ; Luke xviii. 15-17).

Rev. James Macfarlane remarks that these children were of such an age that Jesus, after calling them to Him, took them up in His arms.

And now let us inquire as to the effect of the Saviour's blessing upon these little ones. Will any one say that it was an unmeaning or useless formality, that the prayers of the Son of God were not answered, and that these little

children did not then and there receive "the kingdom of God," undergo a change of heart, and become as real Christians as the oldest of His disciples? Observe also the Saviour's declarations that "of such is the kingdom of God," and that "whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke xviii. 17). Alas! the greatest difficulty with older sinners is here illustrated by our Divine Master, that they cannot have that trustful and obedient faith in their Heavenly Father's promises and commands which is so natural to the little child. The child believes the facts or principles its parent states as true, and obeys his orders without knowing the reason, relying upon his judgment and yielding to his will.

Nor was this a miraculous imposition of hands in any way different from ordinary conversion. The little children have the same living Saviour now as those had whom He blessed while on earth, and "His hand is not shortened that it cannot save" (Isa. lix. 1). Little children can now come to Jesus just as they did then, and receive the same blessing. He is now sending the Holy Spirit, in answer to prayer, to testify of Him, and to direct sinners to Him as the Saviour.

"JESUS WANTS 'UM."

Our Saviour is still saying, as of old, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark x. 14).

In a Sunday-school where all the children were expected to repeat a text of Scripture, a very small boy commenced the above verse, but, through embarrassment, could only get as far as "Suffer little children." He started again, and was only able to add the word "come." The third time, with more energy, he began and ended as follows: "*Suffer*

*the little children to come unto Me, for—*JESUS WANTS 'UM ALL TO COME, AND DON'T ANY OF YOU BIG FOLKS STOP 'UM."

To say the least, the little fellow had the true idea of the passage, though he expressed it somewhat roughly.

Rev. R. G. Pardee most thoroughly believed in the early conversion of children. He was for many years regarded as an oracle in Sunday-school matters. I believe that all who knew him loved him. It was my pleasure to spend many happy hours in his own home. Whenever it was my privilege to hold meetings anywhere in the vicinity of New York, he was generally present. He loved especially to point the anxious little ones to Christ. I have no doubt that in heaven he has met some of those whom he pointed to the atoning sacrifice. Words spoken by *him* were the occasion of the hymn "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by" being written. I well remember that on a Saturday afternoon, in Dr. Terhune's church, in Newark, N.J., in 1864, Mr. Pardee rose in one of the crowded Children's Meetings and made some very impressive remarks on the answer given to Blind Bartimeus, in Luke xviii. 37, "They told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Miss Campbell, a Sunday-school teacher, was present, and shortly after wrote that striking hymn, which has been sung by thousands, and tens of thousands, the world over. It struck me that it might be set to music, and I found it could be sung very well to the tune "Sweet Hour of Prayer." There were originally nine verses. For twelve years I have used it,* and it has always been popular in evangelistic services; multitudes have been awakened by it, and led to cry out, as did the blind man, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

* See "HYMNS OF SALVATION," edited by E. P. Hammond. Pp. 26 and 27. This hymn was also one of the favourites in "SONGS AND SOLOS," and was frequently sung with great effect by Mr. Sankey.

A gambler once came into a morning meeting, which crowded the Congregational Church in Lockport, N.Y., while we were singing that hymn; and at the close of it, though it was the first meeting he had attended, he arose, and with tears streaming down his cheeks begged the Christians to pray for him. Earnest prayer at once ascended in his behalf, and it was answered. A few nights after, in relating his experience before a large assembly in Dr. Wisner's Church, he referred to this hymn as having been the means of awakening him, and added, "As I went out of the church that day, and over the canal, I threw the 'Devil's Testament,' with its fifty-two leaves, into it." I am sure he never played a card afterwards. He lived a consistent Christian life, and has since died a happy death.

I might fill pages relating similar instances to illustrate the good this hymn has accomplished.

I have been extremely sorry to see that in many of the hymn-books which contain it, the *second* verse, which is as follows, is omitted :

"E'en children feel the potent spell,
And haste their new-found joy to tell;
In crowds they to the place repair
Where Christians daily bow in prayer:
Hosannas mingle with the cry,
'Jesus of Nazareth passeth by!'"

The seven verses together are a little sermon in themselves, and it seems to me that they are so connected that none of them should be discarded. By this hymn, I believe multitudes have been led to Christ; and they owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Pardee for having suggested, as well as to Miss Campbell for having written, it. I have been led to write these words partly for the sake of giving emphasis to Mr. Pardee's words, in "The Sabbath-school Index," on the early conversion of children :

"Immediate conversion ought to be the aim and expectation of every faithful Sabbath-school teacher. It is indeed a poor excuse to suffer a child to drown because we have but one opportunity of saving it. When a child is in danger of perishing, we do not first try to educate it, but to *save it*. The fact evidently is, that the great mass of children ought to be led directly to Christ and become child-Christians without delay; and multitudes would be so led, methinks, if parents and teachers and pastors had sufficient confidence in the power of God's Word and Spirit, and had faith in the early conversion of children to God. Many of our most learned divines and most devoted and useful Christian ladies date their conversion from the early ages of three, four, five, and six years.

"We have heard many pastors declare in Sabbath-school conventions, that 'They never could remember when they did not love the Lord Jesus with all their hearts.' And we believe with the pious Richard Baxter, that if Christian parents were faithful in the use of the means God has put in their hands, most of their children would be converted before they are old enough to understand a sermon.

"It is a fact that should never be forgotten, that the children, even the little children of our Christian families and Sunday-schools, all *want* to be Christians more than they want anything else. Little ones of five or six years tell us that they wet their pillows night after night with tears of sorrow for sin; and, more than all earthly longings, they long for some one to lead them to Jesus. Such is the testimony of devoted ministers and Christian ladies in great numbers; and many of us can realize it all, most bitterly, if we will only recall our early childhood and live that over again.

"Said one little girl of four summers, 'Mamma, I should think that anybody who *knows* Jesus would love Him.'

"This is the feeling of well-trained children in great

numbers. They want pure, simple instruction as to who Jesus Christ is, and what He is to *them*.

All the Gospel knowledge really necessary for salvation lies, as it were, in a nut-shell. The knowledge of their fall and sinfulness, and the atonement and redemption there is in Jesus Christ, and which, to a willing mind, can be taught in a few minutes, is all the knowledge really necessary for salvation. Really teach this, and it will remain attached to the natural conscience, and only awaits the spark of grace from the Holy Spirit to descend and act upon it, and renew the heart and change the life.

"This subject is one of overwhelming importance. It is the vital point of all Bible teaching. When Sabbath-school teachers learn the holy art of leading children to Jesus, then we may expect conversions. Sometimes we have known one-third of all the members of large Sabbath-schools to unite with the Church of Christ in a single season. Why should not this oftener be the case? Why should it not be the general rule in all our schools? and will it not be so, if the teachers will but have faith in God, faith in His Word, and faith in childhood, and aim directly to bring the children to Christ for salvation? The great point is to get Bible truth, the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, to bear directly on the conscience, heart, and life of the child. Convince him thereby of his sin; then lead him by a simple trusting faith to Jesus' blood shed for *him*. Seek the proffered, willing aid of God's Holy Spirit believingly, and the work is done. 'This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent'" (John xvii. 3).

LITTLE ELIZA.

A little more than eleven years ago, there were some Children's Meetings in Towanda, Pennsylvania, where a good

many children and youth learned to love the dear Saviour. Little Eliza, my wife's niece, only four and a half years of age, wanted to go with her brothers and sisters to the meetings. Just to please her, her father and mother permitted her to go. I do not think they imagined at the time that she would understand what was said, or would get any good. But though she was so little, Eliza *did* understand all that was said about Jesus dying on the cross, that we might have our sins forgiven and be saved for ever in heaven. And when she heard that God was waiting to accept little children for Christ's sake, she went to Him in believing prayer, and asked Him to forgive her sins, and give her a new heart, and make her His own child. I often talked with her after that, and felt quite sure that she had trusted in Christ, and was saved.

That was in January, 1866. Nearly three years passed away, and still, day by day, little Eliza lived the life of a Christian. All who knew her felt that she did truly love the blessed Saviour of little children, and that daily she tried to please Him. I could not help loving her, and so did all who knew her.

I cannot tell you how sad we felt when one day in London, we received a letter from her father, saying :

"I write to tell you of the death of our dear little daughter Eliza, who went to her Saviour about one o'clock in the morning of October 26, after an illness of only thirty-four hours, aged seven years, five months, and fourteen days. I left home on Monday, leaving her reading her last Sabbath-school book, 'On the Rock and on the Sand.' She kissed me her last 'good-bye' till we kiss again in heaven.

need not speak to you of her lovely Christian life and character, nor of the winning ways of this favourite little one. What a comfort we have in knowing that long ago

she learned to know and love and trust in Jesus—that she went to Him, and never left Him !”

She was one who died early. But her father wrote of her :

“I can only think of Eliza as having gone over the river first, because she was best prepared ; and as she always so joyfully ran to meet me on my return home, so she will run into my arms when I follow her home to heaven.”





CHAPTER III.

WILL CHILDREN CONTINUE STEADFAST?

WORDS OF JESUS :

„ IT IS NOT THE WILL OF YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN THAT ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES SHOULD PERISH.”

Matt. xviii. 14.



KNOW that many believe that it is easy to work upon the feelings of children—to get them thoroughly excited with a sort of religious enthusiasm, and then to ask them if they love Jesus, and if they say “Yes,” to pronounce them converted. I know that even good Christians who have not had the opportunity of labouring among children for their salvation, have been heard to express ideas similar to these.

Years ago, when I first began to labour amongst them, and saw them in large numbers profess to have experienced a change of heart, the question was often asked me, “Do *you* believe those children have been really converted?” At that time I had no answer to give, for the reason that I had no data on which to form a correct conclusion.

Before we can reason philosophically by the law of induction, and lay down principles and conclusions, philosophers teach us that we must gather a great number of facts from different sources. For instance, we say the sun will rise to-morrow, simply because since the creation of the world it has, day after day, thrown its rays upon the earth

as it turns upon its axis. We therefore regard it safe to say that the sun will rise to-morrow.

The only answer I could give was, "I hope they will hold out. I know that we have prayed for the Holy Spirit to awaken them and show them their sinfulness; I know that we have tried to hold up Christ as the only Saviour. But, after all, it may prove an evanescent work. It may be, that it is only excitement; that these children's feelings only have been wrought upon; that they have never with the eye of faith beheld Christ bleeding on the cross for them; and that therefore their present earnestness will all pass away as the morning cloud and the early dew."

This was the only position that I had any authority for taking fifteen and twenty years ago; but since that period I have taken great pains to ascertain what have been the prominent results of what might be called the phenomena concerning these children. And now I feel that I am in a position to state DEFINITE FACTS that certainly ought to encourage the faith of those who have had less opportunity of observing the result of labours put forth directly for the salvation of the young.

I have frequently revisited places, and found those who years ago were converted when children, grown up to be men and women; and what is more, I have found them *earnest Christians*, and ready to testify that when "those Children's Meetings were held" in their town or city, they experienced the forgiveness of their sins and a change of heart, and then began to live the new life which is by the faith of the Son of God, "who loved us and gave Himself for us."

In nearly every city and town where I have laboured for the last few years, I have found some who have of their own accord said to me, in substance, something like this: "So many years ago, when a child, I was converted in the Children's Meetings held in our place, and I thank God for

it; for I have thus been kept by His grace from a thousand sins into which others of my age have fallen."

An item of experience with regard to the Children's Meetings I was permitted to hold in London, in 1867, bears upon the subject of this chapter. To show how God's providence unexpectedly prepares the way for His people to work for Him, it may be interesting to refer to a singular circumstance, which led to our visit to England.

In the summer of 1864, I was sitting under a tree near "Mountain House" in the Catskill Mountains, reading a book, when a gentleman passing asked me if I could tell him the way to Eagle Rock. I replied that I should be happy to *show* him the way. The consequence was that we spent the forenoon together conversing mostly upon religious topics, and scenes and persons that we were both acquainted with in other lands. We did not learn each other's names until we returned to the hotel, when he introduced me to his wife, Mrs. E. D. G. Prime, daughter of Dr. Goodell, of Constantinople. Dr. Prime told me that his brother was writing a sequel to "The Power of Prayer," and asked if I had anything on the subject of answers to prayer and concerning the conversion of children. I gave him a copy of "The Harvest Work of the Holy Spirit," and referred him to some of the facts narrated, which were afterwards put into his brother's book.

In 1868, four years afterwards, I received a letter from the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, of London, saying that he had been reading "Five Years of Prayer," by Dr. Prime, which had been republished in England, and that his heart was deeply moved in hearing of what God had been doing by His Holy Spirit in the conversion of children in America. In his letter he requested me to come to London and hold a series of meetings similar to those of which he had read in America. He said that he believed that other churches

would unite, and the work would spread through the city ; and though it might begin with the children, it would not end there. The invitation was accepted. I found Baptist Noel surrounded with a most earnest, consecrated band of Christian men and women. They had great confidence in their pastor, then nearly seventy years of age. He had long been with them, and they seemed ready at once to comply with every request he made. Much prayer was offered for a great blessing.

When the Children's Meetings commenced, on Sunday afternoon, his large church was crowded in every part. The Spirit of God manifested itself with mighty power, as on the day of Pentecost. It is not too much to say, that at the very first meeting hundreds were bathed in tears. There had been nothing said to work upon the fears of the children. The one theme was *THE LOVE OF JESUS* in giving Himself to die for us. On Monday the same scene was repeated ; the aisles were so crowded in the inquiry meeting, to which nearly every one remained, that it was difficult to move about. All day Tuesday I was troubled as to the best method of conducting the second meeting. In my own mind I was satisfied that a division ought to be made between those who were anxious and those who were rejoicing in Christ ; yet I was fearful to propose this division, lest Mr. Noel should not approve of it. I feared lest I should do anything to forfeit the confidence of this good man. I felt that, if I were to labour in London for some length of time, it was very important to have the co-operation of this man, who, if he had remained in the Episcopal Church, many believe, would have been Bishop of London.

In the evening of Tuesday, as I entered the church, it presented the same crowded appearance. Mr. Noel touched me upon the shoulder and invited me to his vestry. In his quiet manner he said, "I found, as did also others,

that there were a large number of children in the meeting yesterday who had evidently experienced a change of heart. It seems to me, therefore, that it would be wise to call those who have been converted into the side room, and then let them come out upon the platform, that their parents and teachers may see that they have 'the witness of the Spirit' and are not ashamed to confess Christ."

I replied, "That is just what I desired all day, but I hesitated to propose it, fearing that course might not meet your approval. I think," said I, "that it is natural and proper, but I would rather you would propose it."

"I will willingly do so," he replied.

At the close of the Address he asked the children who had been converted to meet him in the side room. I at once arose and warned the children against self-deception, and told them that if any went into the room among the young converts who had not been converted, they would tell a terrible falsehood.

I dwelt at some length upon the spiritual evidences of a change of heart, and to make doubly sure, I requested five or six judicious persons to act as door-keepers, and to allow none to pass through until they had been examined with great care. A long time was spent in examining two hundred and thirty. We then followed them into the vestry and there re-examined them. Still we could not induce any of the two hundred and thirty to go back into their seats. Mr. Noel then opened another door, and, like a shepherd followed by a flock of lambs, he walked upon the large elevated platform with all these children following him. Many parents in the gallery were in tears as they pointed out one or more of their children, saying, "There is our dear child." Some who were not Christians found themselves under deep conviction, and felt a stronger desire to be followers of Jesus than they had ever experienced

before. The same thing was repeated the next day, and about one hundred more were added.

Mr. Noel printed a great deal upon the subject which was read all over Great Britain. He thoroughly endorsed the work, and repeatedly expressed his conviction that it was not of man, but most unmistakably the work of the Holy Spirit. At the end of three weeks he gave a soirée in the church, to which he allowed none to come except those who gave evidence, after having been watched and examined by their Sunday-school teachers, that they had experienced God's regenerating grace in their hearts. The number of those admitted, though many were refused, was three hundred.*

At the end of the year I returned again to Mr. Noel's church, and at the close of the first meeting I requested that those children, and only those, who one year before were examined as young converts and allowed to go into the side room, and from thence to the platform, should do the same again. To the delight of all, and the astonishment, no doubt, of some, those *same children* were there, the number nearly as large as the year before; and with the same confidence and humility they sat upon the platform again. It was a most impressive sight, one which those who witnessed it will not soon forget. We spoke with many of those dear children personally, and found that though some of them had passed through severe trials, and at times had been almost ready to give up their hope in Christ, they had nevertheless been upheld by the Saviour's promise—"I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE NOR FORSAKE THEE."

I have, in one way and another, heard from many of them during the last ten years. My heart has often been rejoiced to learn of their progress in the divine life. One

* These remarkable Children's Meetings at John Street Chapel were fully reported at the time in *The Revival* (now *The Christian*).

of those dear children was burned to death, but though she went home in a chariot of fire, she was heard to sing amidst her suffering—

“Jesus, take this heart of mine,
Make it pure and wholly Thine;
Thou hast bled and died for me,
I will henceforth live for Thee.”

While writing this chapter, I have received a letter from the Rev. J. O. Fiske, D.D., for many years pastor of the leading church at Bath, Maine. He is known all through New England as a most conservative and reliable man. His words will have weight with those who know him.

“BATH, MAINE, *August 3, 1877.*

“REV. E. P. HAMMOND:

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—In reply to your note of the 21st inst., I am happy to say that your labours among our people in the year 1862 were eminently successful in awakening an interest among the children, as well as in securing the conversion of many older persons. *At that time quite a number of young children expressed a hope in Christ, and became members of our church. These have proved by their subsequent lives that they were true disciples.* Some appeared to be interested, who did not subsequently give any evidence of having been converted; but I have been frequently called to see in sickness, or in the hour of approaching death, others who had made no public profession of their faith, but who evidently enjoyed and had enjoyed for years the comforts of that hope which they first realized when you were here. Some of these were from families in which no strong Christian influence existed to help them.

“I look back with pleasure to your visit here, and rejoice in God that so many precious lambs were then gathered into the fold of our Lord.

“Yours very cordially,

JOHN O. FISKE”

REV. WILLIAM TAYLOR'S WORK AMONG THE CHILDREN
IN AFRICA.

While at Ocean Grove in the summer of 1877, I had the pleasure of meeting the Rev. Wm. Taylor, who has accomplished such a great work in India and Africa. He has written me the following letter, which bears on the subject of this book :

"In answer to your inquiry about the steadfastness of converted children, I have only time now for a fact or two. At Heald Town, Africa, we had three hundred and sixteen converted in two days ; about one hundred of these were children.

"'But, dear me,' says one, 'such sudden work as that must be very transient—over three hundred persons professing conversion at a two-days' service, and working week-days too ; why, it must have been a straw fire that will soon die out.' Indeed, after so long a preparation, why should not 'the Lord whom ye seek come suddenly to His temple'? Was not that the way the Holy Spirit did when He first entered on His great work in Jerusalem? If He hath changed His methods of working, it is a wonder He hath not informed us, so that we may adjust ourselves to them. That was a quick word by which three thousand souls were saved in one day, under the first Gospel sermon they ever heard in their lives, and yet thirty-three years afterwards St. Luke testified to their steadfastness, saying, 'They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.'

"To illustrate the genuine character and permanency of this work of the Spirit, at Heald Town, so far as we can in the time which has since elapsed, I may be allowed to copy part of

A LETTER BY REV. WM. SARGENT,

who is prepared to testify of this work nearly ten months after my visit. His letter is dated Graham's Town, April 4, 1867, in which he says :

“ ‘ I am thankful to be able to say, that up to the time of my leaving Heald Town, and since my departure, the work has been widening and deepening. At the time of our District Meeting in January, besides about two hundred old members, who had either obtained for the first time a sense of their acceptance with God, or had recovered what they had lost, and many who had been raised to a higher platform of Christian experience, there were three hundred and fifty-eight, principally *young* persons, who had been received into the church, most of whom had been made happy in God's pardoning love. At the Quarterly Visitation I was truly astonished with the experience of some of these young people, who described their conversion in a way that would have been impossible, had they not been taught of God. Out of about four hundred professing conversion, not above two or three had, up to the time of my leaving Heald Town, failed to attend prayer-meetings, where they spoke of their continued love for Christ. This, I may remark, has been a striking peculiarity in the recent revival during your visit in these parts. Immediately after every previous revival, there was always a considerable falling away; but the cases of defalcation, in this instance, have been exceedingly few, compared with the numbers brought in.

“ ‘ The Sabbath-schools and day-schools, in a short time, almost doubled their members, and the thirst for learning among the young people became most manifest in an unprecedented application for school-books, and that from children in the adjacent hamlets, who previously cared for none of these things.

“Many of these young people formed themselves into prayer-meetings, which they held in the fields alone. One Sabbath afternoon, not long before leaving Heald Town, I was walking a little below the Institution towards the “kloof” (a deep gorge), when I saw some twenty or thirty native children making their way down into the “bush.” I was suspicious that they were meeting for purposes of play, and therefore watched them. I soon found, to my agreeable surprise, that they were a company of converted children, met for a prayer-meeting, spending an hour after school in alternate prayer and singing. The six or eight European children at Heald Town also formed themselves into a prayer-meeting.

“My little girl, nine years of age, went from house to house among the Europeans at the station, and invited all the children about her own age to a little room, the use of which she had obtained for the purpose, and formed them into a prayer-meeting.

“One day she came to me, saying, “Pa, what can I do for that poor sick man?”

“She had heard me speak of a sick native man, whom I had been visiting. I said,

““What do you mean, my dear?”

““Oh,” she replied, “I should like to do something for him?”

“I told her that she might go and buy a few groceries at the shop, and take them to him. She did so; but took her New Testament under her arm, and having given him the groceries, she read several portions of God’s Word to him, and then asked him if he was happy. I knew nothing of it till the man told me himself what a comfort it had been to him.

W. S.’

“Rev. Clark P. Hard, Presiding Elder of Madras District,

India, a most indefatigable and successful minister of the Gospel, was converted to God when he was a child of five years.

"I believe it to be God's plan to have the children justified and purified so as to give perfect praise to Him while in the nursery—the department of babes and sucklings—and thus develop a fireproof Christian character before they are brought into contact with the corrupting agencies and influences of the outside world.

"Your brother in Jesus,

"WM. TAYLOR."

Mr. Taylor also states the following :

"I knew a little girl nine years old, who, at a meeting I once attended, longed to find Jesus. The Good Spirit had spoken to her heart; and as the big tears were streaming down her face, she put her little hands together, and said, 'O Lord, for Christ's sake, have mercy on me a sinner. For Christ's sake, give me a new heart.' She prayed very earnestly for some time, and then as she saw that Jesus had died for her, her countenance brightened up, and she said, 'Oh, praise the Lord! I've found Jesus. He is my Saviour. Glory to God, He has pardoned all my sins.' She was so glad, that she did not know what to do. She was an orphan girl, and had not known a parent's care for years; but now she knew that God was her Father, and loved her, and cared for her. As she was praising the Lord aloud, a minister said to her, 'Little girl, what are you praising the Lord for?' 'Because I love Him,' said she; 'glory be to God, I do love Him.' 'Why do you love Him?' continued the minister. 'Because He first loved me, and He has pardoned my sins.'

"The preacher at first thought that she was so small she did not know what she was about, but he soon found that she was truly enlightened by the 'Spirit of adoption.'

The next day her brother said to her, rather tauntingly, 'Ah, Virginia, I think your goodness will not last long!' 'Well, James,' said she meekly, 'your thinks will not remove it.'

"Virginia grew up in the fear of the Lord, and is now a Christian mother in California."

Paris R——, a boy of my acquaintance in Virginia, found peace in believing when he was eight years of age. I saw him at a camp meeting when he was nine years old, and he was called on to pray in public nearly as often as any of the men, and prayed with much greater effect than many of them.

During that camp meeting Paris's old grandfather became awakened to see his lost condition as a stranger to God, and asked his little grandson to pray for him.

Oh, could you have seen the grey-headed man kneeling down, and groaning under the bondage of sin, and the little boy pleading with his Father in heaven to have mercy on his dear grandfather, you would have said, "What a mercy that the old man has so good a boy to pray for him!" It was believed that it was the boy's good example that brought the old man to his knees.

Time would fail to tell of the numerous instances of juvenile piety in the past and present history of the Church. Many of her best ministers, and a large proportion of her most exemplary members, were converted in their childhood and youth.

Mary W——, of Western Virginia, was made savingly acquainted with God when she was eight years old.

A year after her conversion, her father, who was a very wicked man, fell out with her class-leader.

The following Sunday morning, after Mary had dressed herself to go to church, her father said to her, "Mary,

where are you going?" "I am going to class, father," replied the little girl meekly. "You sha'n't go to class; I'm going to put a stop to it; you sha'n't go any more," replied the father, in very harsh tones. "Oh, father, do please let me go," said Mary, in earnest tones of supplication. "Hush up! not a word! I tell you you shall not go." "Father," said Mary, "I must go to class. The Lord will be displeased with me if I don't go; you know, father, I love you, and I try to please you, but I must not displease the Lord." "If you go to class, I'll whip you; see if I don't," said the father. What was the poor little girl to do? She felt that she should sin against the Lord if she did not go to class: if she went, she would displease her father, and be punished.

The Apostle Paul says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right;" but this wicked old parent was not "in the Lord." Still, he should have been obeyed, had he not set his authority against the Lord. "Honour thy father and thy mother," is the law, but a child can never do that by dishonouring God. Unreserved obedience to parents is the duty of all children, unless they clearly see, as little Mary did, that the parents' commands are in opposition to God's commands: then it becomes their duty to "obey God rather than man."

But what could poor Mary W——, a little girl of nine summers, do, when her father said, "If you go to class, I'll whip you"? She was greatly affected, but in the midst of her tears said, "Father, I would rather take a whipping than offend the Lord. I am your little girl, and you know I want to be good." That should have moved a father's heart, but it only enraged him the more, and in a most violent tone he said, "You saucy imp, if you go to class I'll shoot you." "Well, father," said Mary, "I had rather be shot than sin against the Lord," and then immediately

started on her way to class. The wicked father followed her outside the gate, and picking up a thorn bush, struck her with it a couple of times, tearing her bonnet and dress a little ; but she went on, and he returned to the house. When Mary came back, with her heart full of the love of Jesus, her mother met her at the gate, and said, "Oh, Mary, don't go into the house ; your father has loaded the gun, and I am afraid he will shoot you." The mother wept, but did not take hold of the little girl to restrain her, so Mary walked into the house. The father had gone upstairs. When Mary went in she began to sing one of her sweet hymns. She was a melodious singer. Often listeners were stirred, and burst forth in tears.

As she sang, her father called her, "Mary, come up here !" she immediately obeyed, and went upstairs, with the anticipation of being shot by her enraged father. She had a martyr's spirit, as every boy and girl ought to have, and was not afraid to die. When she reached the top of the stairs, her father said, "Mary, that is a very pretty song ; sing some more." Then, overcome with emotion, he dropped on his knees, saying, "Mary, will you forgive your wicked father ?" "Oh yes, father," said Mary, as she put her arms round his neck, "I forgive you with all my heart." "Mary, Mary, pray for me," said he ; "oh, pray that God may forgive my sins !" She knelt by his side, and with streaming eyes, pleaded with the Lord for her father. The struggle was continued for hours, but resulted in the man's conversion to God. He joined the Church, and in it lived and died.

Mary continued steadfast till the day of her death. She became a woman of great faith and usefulness. Her house was a home for the preachers, and each member of her family took delight in ministering to their comfort. I have seen scores of souls converted under her roof, and, as I

believe, principally through her instrumentality. She has, during my absence in California, gone, in holy triumph, to her home in heaven.

Any number of facts, similar to these, might be gathered to assist us in giving a positive answer to the question at the heading of this chapter, **WILL CONVERTED CHILDREN CONTINUE STEADFAST?**

Rev. John Todd says of those converted early, "They were like the early small stars of evening, very small, very pure, and bright, and beautiful. They held on their way, too, gloriously. I do not fear that a converted child will dishonour religion, so much as I do that the aged sinner, who has lived in the iron habits of sin for half a century, will do so. With him it is the work of life and death to break off these old habits. His thoughts, wicked and vile, will ever and anon flow back into the old deep-worn channels. But piety in the child gushes up like the breaking out of a new spring, making its own channel, growing, and widening, and beautifying as it flows."

Dr. Spencer, in his "Pastor's Sketches," continually refers to cases which have come under his own observation, yet no one would think of calling him an egotist. He was, I believe, an humble, earnest minister, seeking to know God's will, and then desirous of following it.

My one great object in writing this book is, as I said at the outset, to enable God's people everywhere to labour, with more success, for the salvation of children. If a miner prospects in a new region, and finds rich beds of silver or gold, far beyond his compass, he naturally tells his friends, and the news soon flies on the wings of the wind. Multitudes flock thither, as soon as they are satisfied that gold in abundance is obtainable. So I feel that the souls of these dear children are more precious than silver or gold. My

great desire is to encourage many more to work this mine, and to win the souls of the young, which shall, one day, form their "crown of rejoicing."

One thousand and one children FROM THE SABBATH-SCHOOLS ALONE in and about Rochester, Massachussets, joined the churches, as the result of God's blessing on the union meetings held there in 1863. Among the number were some as young as nine years.

DR. CAMPBELL'S STATEMENT.

In regard to this work, the Rev. Dr. Campbell published at the time the following statement:—

"Six years ago Mr. Hammond held a similar series of meetings in this city, and it is sometimes asked, 'What has become of the converts? Several hundreds were received into the churches at the time, and now, after the lapse of six years, who can find them?' At the Central Church, a careful investigation of this question has been made, with the following results:

"As the fruit of the revival season of 1863, one hundred and sixty-three persons were received into the Central Church. This is not counting a large number who have united with the same church since that time, and who refer their conversion to that occasion. Of the one hundred and sixty-three, one hundred and fifty-three are either in good standing in the church to-day, or have taken a regular dismission to other churches, or have died in hope. The remaining ten are marked 'unknown,' they having mostly removed from the city; but, with the exception of two or three, they were, at last accounts, walking in an orderly Christian manner. This is the record of a church that was, for nearly two years subsequent to Mr. Hammond's labours, virtually without a pastor. Of the one hundred and sixty-three new recruits, only ten missing at the end of

six years, and those ten most of them doing well at last accounts. This statement can be relied upon, and it shows a condition of things almost without parallel in the history of revivals."

THE CONVERSION OF PHOEBE BARTLETT.

In the first chapter (p. 2) I alluded to Dr. Jonathan Edwards's account of the conversion of Phoebe Bartlett. I venture now to make an extract from his interesting narrative :

"She was born in March, 1731. In 1735 she was greatly affected by the talk of her brother, who had been hopelessly converted a little before, at about eleven years of age, and then seriously talked to her about the great things of religion.

"Her parents did not know of it at that time, and were not wont, in the counsels they gave to their children, particularly to direct themselves to her, by reason of her being so young, and, as they supposed, not capable of understanding. But after her brother had talked to her, they observed her listening very earnestly to the advice they gave to the other children, and she was observed very constantly to retire, several times in a day, as was concluded, for secret prayer ; and she grew more and more engaged in religion, and was more frequently in her closet, till at last she was wont to visit it five or six times in a day, and was so engaged in it that nothing would at any time divert her from her stated closet exercises.

"Her mother often observed and watched her, when such things occurred as she thought most likely to divert her, either by putting it out of her thoughts or otherwise engaging her inclinations, but never could observe her to fail.

"But on Thursday, the last day of July, about the middle of the day, the child being in the room where she used to retire, her mother heard her speaking aloud, which was unusual, and her voice seemed to be as of one exceeding importunate and engaged, but her mother could distinctly hear only these words, 'Pray, blessed Lord, give me salvation ! I PRAY, BEG, pardon all my sins !' When the child had done prayer she came and sat down by her mother, and cried out aloud. Her mother very earnestly asked her several times what the matter was before she would make any answer, but she continued crying, like one

in anguish of spirit. Her mother then asked her whether she was afraid that God would not give her salvation. She answered, 'Yes, I am afraid I shall go to hell!' Her mother then endeavoured to quiet her, and told her she would not have her cry; she hoped God would give her salvation. This did not quiet her at all—but she continued earnestly crying for some time, till at length she suddenly ceased, and began to smile, and presently said, with a smiling countenance, 'Mother, the kingdom of heaven is come to me!' Soon after the child said this, she retired to her room, and her mother went over to her brother's, who was next neighbour; and when she came back the child met her mother with this cheerful speech, 'I can find God now!'

"Then the child spoke again and said, 'I love God!' Her mother asked her how well she loved God, whether she loved God better than her father or mother. She said, 'Yes.' Her mother asked her whether she was afraid of going to hell, and if it was that which had made her cry. She answered, 'Yes, I was; but now I shall not be.' Her mother asked her whether she thought that God had given her salvation. She answered, 'Yes.' Her mother asked her when. She answered, 'To-day.'

"She appeared all that afternoon exceedingly cheerful and joyful. That evening, as she lay in bed, she called to her one of her little cousins, who was present in the room, as having something to say to him; and when he came she told him that heaven was better than earth.

"On the Sabbath she was asked whether she believed in God. She answered, 'Yes.' And being told that Christ was the Son of God, she made ready answer, and said, 'I know it.'

"From this time there has appeared a very remarkable abiding change in the child. She has been very strict upon the Sabbath, and seems to long for the Sabbath-day before it comes, and will often in the week-time be inquiring how long it is to the Sabbath-day, and must have them particularly counted over that are between before she will be contented."

Dr. Edwards goes on to describe at length the evidences which she continued to exhibit of a change of heart, showing her deep anxiety for the salvation of her brothers, sisters, and friends.

We do not doubt that many said, "She will not hold out;" but she adorned religion in future life, became the

wife of Noah Parsons, and "died triumphantly *at the age of about seventy.*"

I am thankful that I have seen one of her grandchildren, and heard her speak with great affection of her godly grandmother, Phoebe Bartlett.*

I received the following letter from a child in Kansas, which relates to the subject of this chapter. She is now EIGHT years old; but when she became a Christian she was only FIVE YEARS OF AGE.

"LAWRENCE, KANSAS.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I can remember when you used to teach the children about Christ Jesus, day by day. I used to go to your meetings, and there I was converted, and I am trying to live up to my profession. I pray mornings and nights, and live as near as I can to Christ. I hope you'll pray for me, so that I may be more like Him. I am eight years old.

"From your friend, "G. M. R."

I at once answered this letter, and also sent a few copies of a little Child's Paper which I used to edit, and I received the following:

"LAWRENCE, KANSAS.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I was very glad to get your nice letter. You asked me how I came to write to you. I was sick, and my sister had just come from Sabbath-school and brought me a Sabbath-school paper. Ma looked over the paper, and pretty soon came to a piece, 'THE YOUNG REAPER,' that was written by you, and she read it to me, and she read a letter that was written from a little girl to you. Ma said I might write you if I wanted. I found Jesus at your meetings here. I thought your papers were very nice. I read them over and over. I liked the 'WOODBINE COTTAGE' very, very much. I think I am a Christian because I LOVE TO WORK FOR JESUS, and I ought to love Him, for my Saviour died on the cross. I attend the Baptist church with my father and mother, who are members of the church. I know eleven children among the many who joined the church and were converted when you was here. I remain your affectionate friend, for ever,

"G. M. R."

* See page 2.

TWO WORKERS.

It always gives me pleasure to meet earnest Christians, and especially to find those at work in the inquiry meeting, who say, "So many years ago, when a child, I was converted in the Children's Meeting held in such a place." While in Alton, Illinois, in 1874, I met at our meetings the daughters of Rev. Dr. Wood, Professor in Shurtliff College. They told me that they were converted in the Children's Meetings held in Lewiston, Maine, twelve years before. I regretted how earnestly, at the very first meeting in Alton, they engaged in pointing the anxious little ones to Christ. They had not forgotten the time when they themselves were seeking the Saviour in a somewhat similar meeting. I have just found in "*Little Ones from the Fold*,"* two letters which those sisters wrote me fifteen years ago. I insert them because they bear upon the subject of this chapter.

"LEWISTON, May 19, 1862.

"I have *always* wanted to be a Christian. This spring a dear little cousin died, and his death made me think more, and made me feel more that I wanted to be good, and love the Saviour; and I told mamma how I felt, and asked her to pray for me. The first afternoon you were here, I went to hear you talk to children. I loved to hear you talk about the Lord Jesus, and sing: and I wanted to love Him too. When I came home, papa asked us how we liked the meeting. I could not answer him, but burst into tears. I felt I was *so* wicked. I read my Bible, and asked God to give me a new heart. Monday morning I went to meeting, and you asked me if I loved Jesus; and I did not dare to say 'yes,' but told you I did not. The next Wednesday you took dinner here, and when you asked me again, I thought it would not be wrong for me to tell you I did love Him; and you told me to cling to Him; and I do try do. I love to pray, and read, and sing, and tell of Jesus. Good-bye, dear Mr. Hammond.

"YOUR LITTLE FRIEND."

* A little narrative of the Conversion of Children, published in 1866.

Her sister at the same time wrote as follows :

"I had been feeling that I ought to be a Christian, and I wanted to be one. The first Sabbath you were here, I went to hear you speak to the children. When you requested those who were weeping for their sins to remain, I did so ; but I did not wish to weep. I did not feel as though I wanted to kneel, when you asked them ; and I did not. But I went home wishing I could be a Christian. I went to meeting Monday evening, and stopped to the inquiry meeting. I kept wishing, and yet almost afraid, that you would speak to me. Tuesday, I prayed a great deal, that I might become a Christian. A little while before I went to meeting, I went away and prayed that God would help me to give Him my heart that night. I stopped to the inquiry meeting that night. A young lady came and spoke a few words, and prayed with me ; and after she went away, I felt as if I had given my heart to Jesus. I was *very happy*. I felt as if I would like to have everybody love Jesus. Some of the reasons I think I am a Christian, are, that I love to pray better now ; I love the Bible ; I love to go to meeting ; and I want everybody to love Jesus."

Their father was, at the time those two letters were written, pastor of the Baptist Church in Lewiston. In Upper Alton, I found him a Professor in Shurtleff College. He stated that his two daughters, from the time of their conversion, when little girls in Lewiston, had, during the subsequent fifteen years, lived consistent Christian lives. They now laboured to point anxious little ones to Christ.

"A MAJORITY OF THEM CONTINUE STEADFAST."

In London I received the following letter from a clergyman :

"I have faith in the conversion of children, and for some time have held meetings something similar to yours, I suppose, in connection with my day-school. *Last winter and spring, a number of children were brought to Jesus, and a majority of them remained steadfast.* We meet every Thursday evening, read the Scriptures, and talk about

Jesus, besides spending some time in prayer. Our numbers vary from sixty to one hundred present at once. I conduct the meeting myself; the children join in prayer at the conclusion."

"With very few exceptions, the children are under thirteen years of age.

"I hold private conversations with them during the week; they tell me their little troubles and griefs, and seek counsel. One little girl of twelve years, the only praying person in a family of seven, has often advised with me respecting her parents and brothers. She came to me two days ago with the glad news that her mother had begun to seek the Lord, but that she was very anxious about her father, who was not a good man, but laughed at their 'religious notions,' and never went to the house of God. I advised her to continue to pray for him and exercise faith in God; to be very kind to him, and careful not to do any thing unworthy of a little Christian, and occasionally in a kind manner to bring the subject of religion under his notice. She said she believed that, if she prayed in faith and patiently waited, God would, in His own time, hear her prayers and answer them."

In 1865, in Philadelphia, I had the pleasure for several weeks of being the guest of Matthew W. Baldwin, the well-known builder of churches, as well as of locomotives. He loved to do all in his power to assist in leading little children to Jesus. He told me that *when he was a little boy*, he went to attend the meetings of Dr. Edward D. Griffin in Newark, New Jersey. He had often seen many at the same time deeply affected, as Dr. Griffin described to them the great love of Jesus in giving Himself to die for them.

We find in the "Harvest Work of the Holy Spirit" the

following quotation from Dr. Griffin, descriptive of those meetings which made such a deep impression on the youthful mind of Mr. Baldwin :

“The appearance was as if a collection of waters, long suspended over the town, had fallen at once, and deluged the whole place. For several weeks the people would stay at the close of every evening service to hear some new exhortation ; and it seemed impossible to persuade them to depart, until those on whose lips they hung had retired. At those seasons you might see a multitude weeping and trembling around their minister, and many others standing as astonished spectators of the scene, and beginning to tremble themselves. One Sabbath, after the second service, when I had catechised and dismissed the little children, they gathered around me weeping, and inquiring what they should do. I know not but that a hundred were in tears at once. The scene was as affecting as it was unexpected. Having prayed with them again, and spent some time in exhortation, I attempted to send them away, but with all entreaties I could not prevail upon them to depart until night came on, and then I was obliged to go out with them, and literally force them from me.”

If I remember rightly, Mr. Baldwin told me that he experienced a change of heart at that early age, under the preaching of that good man.

// I have often thought that one reason why Samuel led such an irreproachable life was because, when a little boy in the temple of Shiloh, his answer when called of God was, “Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth !”

// It is commonly held that Jeremiah and John the Baptist, who were “faithful unto death,” were early the children of God’s grace. King Josiah began to reign when he was only eight years of age, and “in the eighth year of

his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David, his father" (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3). Among the early Christians, it is evident from the writings of the fathers, that there were many converted in childhood.

// The early Christians included pious children. Thus Polycarp, martyred at the age of ninety-five, declares he had served God eighty-six years; showing that he was converted at the age of *nine years*. And Justin Martyr testifies of many of both sexes "who had been made disciples of Christ in their childhood and continued uncorrupted all their lives."

While in Chester, England, I visited the church where Matthew Henry preached for many years, and the little study, where he wrote his Commentary. It was a pleasure to remember that he was converted *before he was eleven years old*. It is no wonder that he writes so clearly upon those passages in the New Testament which refer to child piety. Surely Matthew Henry's conversion was not evanescent.

Neither was that of Jonathan Edwards, who was converted, as he thinks, before he was seven years of age. Nor was that of Isaac Watts, who was led to Jesus before he was nine years old, and wrote hymns of praise at that early age. When in Southampton, England, we visited his monument, of the purest white Sicilian marble, nineteen feet high, with a base eight feet square, resting on a pedestal of Aberdeen granite. On the front side Dr. Watts is represented as instructing a group of beautiful children. Underneath are the words,

"He gave to lisping infancy its earliest and purest lessons."

The Rev. L. W. Bacon says: "One of the most eminent and beloved of the pastors of New York City once told me the beautiful story of his Christian experience; how with the earliest dawn of reflection he became conscious of a

deep and tender love for the Saviour, and how, although he had felt many doubts and difficulties, he had finally settled clearly in the conviction that if ever he had known the grace of God, he had known it from the time of those earliest recollections. A few days after this I met the venerable father of my friend on Broadway, and told him that his son had been telling me the story of his religious life. 'Oh no, he has not,' said the good old man; 'HE CANNOT REMEMBER THAT STORY. Only his mother and myself can tell it.' Who will undertake to say at what point a Christian life may not be begun by the inworking of the Holy Spirit?"

HYMN WRITTEN BY A CHILD.

The well-known hymn found in nearly all hymn-books commencing,

"Jesus! and shall it ever be
A sinful child ashamed of Thee?
Ashamed of Thee, whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine through endless days?"

was written by Joseph Gregg when but a child. It had for its heading, when first published, "Shame of Jesus conquered by love, by a youth of ten years."

At a later period he wrote,

"Behold, a Stranger at the door,
He gently knocks, has knocked before;
Has waited long, is waiting still:
You use no other friend so ill."

He became a minister, and preached in Silver Street, London, where he was very useful.

Thus multitudes of cases might be cited of children converted in early childhood, who have lived to attest the

genuineness of the great work wrought upon them by God's Spirit through saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

May the Lord help every reader of this chapter to realize the precious truth contained in the words of Jesus at the beginning—"IT IS NOT THE WILL OF YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN THAT ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES SHOULD PERISH."

"Saviour, who Thy flock art feeding
With the Shepherd's kindest care,
All the feeble gently leading,
While the Lambs Thy bosom share.
Now, these little ones receiving,
Fold them in Thy gracious arm;
There, we know, Thy word believing,
Only there, secure from harm :

"Never, from Thy pasture roving,
Let them be the Lion's prey;
Let Thy tenderness, so loving,
Keep them all life's dangerous way,
Then, within Thy fold eternal,
Let them find a resting place,
Feed in pastures ever vernal,
Drink the rivers of Thy grace."

Wm. A. Muhlenberg, 1826.



CHAPTER IV.

HOW CAN CHILDREN BE LED TO JESUS?

"SHOWING TO THE GENERATION TO COME THE PRAISES OF THE LORD,
AND HIS STRENGTH, AND HIS WONDERFUL WORKS."

Psaln lxxviii. 4.



ANY ask the question, "What is the secret of leading children to Jesus?"

Firstly, if a person would be successful in this work, he must first possess and cultivate a deep love for children. I remember when I was secretary of the "Mills' Missionary Society" in Williams College, it fell to my lot to correspond with missionaries in foreign lands. We thus received a letter from Dr. Calhoun, of Mount Lebanon. In answering the question we had propounded to him, as to how we could become successful missionaries, he enlarged upon the thought that we must CULTIVATE A LOVE FOR MAN as such, no matter what his colour or race. We must feel that every man is a child of Adam, and that God has loved him and given His Son to die for him; that every being on the face of the earth possesses a soul, worth more than all the world. Just so those who would labour successfully among children must learn to *love* them, and must become familiar with their habits of thought, and even with their modes of amusing themselves.

Secondly, A man, to be successful, must have FAITH IN

THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT AND IN THE POWER OF HIS TRUTH. He must believe the words of Jesus, who says: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Then he must bring out vividly before the minds of the children, the great fact that THE LORD JESUS CHRIST LOVED EACH ONE OF THEM, AND DIED A CRUEL DEATH ON THE CROSS IN THEIR STEAD.

You say: "Every Sunday-school scholar in the land knows this." I admit it, but it is one thing to *know* it, and another and very different thing to *FEEL it deep down in the heart*. I say then that he must dwell on the sufferings of Christ until the children see Him vividly "crucified before them." They must see the crown of thorns upon His brow. They must see the heavy lashes laid upon His bare, bleeding back. They must hear the shouts of the mob as they cry: "Away with Him! away with Him!—crucify Him!" They must see the cross laid upon His bleeding, quivering form, and then follow Him, sinking beneath its weight, as He bears it along the Via Dolorosa. They must hear the heavy mallet as, with blow after blow, the nails pierce His feet. Having seen Him walking the seven sorrowful ways—from the Last Supper to the Garden of Gethsemane; from the Garden of Gethsemane to the house of Annas; from the house of Annas to the house of Caiaphas; from the house of Caiaphas to Pilate; from Pilate to Herod; and from Herod back to Pilate's Hall; and thence to Calvary,—they should then be called upon to listen at least to some of the seven sorrowful cries which He uttered as He hung upon the cross; and when the cry reaches their ears, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" they should then be taught that HE WAS FORSAKEN THAT THEY MIGHT NOT BE FORSAKEN; that all these dreadful sufferings, especially His soul sufferings, which were infinitely beyond His physical sufferings, were endured in their stead. Then, further, they

should be told of His death and burial, of His ascension, and briefly be taught that God, in raising Christ from the dead, showed His acceptance of His "finished work." Then in a few words they should be told that He is coming again to judge the world, and that there will be a great separation upon that day: that all those who loved and trusted Him here will be on the right hand, while those who rejected Him will be found upon the left hand.

These great facts should be illustrated by simple stories, and made vivid by illustrations that the children can understand; especially should great stress be laid upon THE DOCTRINE OF SUBSTITUTION. Children as young as five and six years of age can understand this doctrine, if it is illustrated in a simple manner.

Of course, every Christian knows that all this preaching will be in vain without the power of the HOLY SPIRIT. No Christian will engage in this sacred work without much prayer: he certainly will not engage in it successfully unless he feels his entire dependence upon God, unless he often listens to His words: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. iv. 6).

But he who would win children to Christ must not stop here. After the Address he must go among them, speaking to them ONE BY ONE. He will then find that many who have appeared indifferent up to that moment will burst into tears when spoken to, saying, "Oh, I have been a great sinner not to love that precious Saviour!"

Dr. Mark Hopkins, of Williams' College, once said to his students, "*Young gentlemen, you will accomplish little in the world unless you work in a line with God.*"

That one remark made a deep impression on my mind. It is only as WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM (2 Cor. vi. 1) that we find a divine power accompanying our words and efforts.

It has therefore been a careful study with me to see what agencies God most blesses in leading the young and old to Christ; and I have frequently found that very many who were not at all affected by the address, have, by personal dealing in the inquiry meeting, been brought under conviction. Many have testified that it was the simple question, "Do you love Jesus?" put directly to them, that first startled them to the realization of the fact that they had not truly loved Him, and were therefore guilty of the greatest sin.

When in Scotland, one of the first places I visited was Dundee, that I might see the grave of Robert McCheyne, and the church in which he pointed so many children and adults to Jesus.

I had not only read, but *studied* his life, written by his personal friend, Andrew Bonar; not simply that I might find who he was, and what he had done in the world, but that I might, if possible, catch something of his yearning desire for the salvation of souls.

It was therefore a great pleasure for me to stand upon the floor of his vestry, which one of his elders told me he had seen covered with children seeking the Saviour.

Not long after, I made the acquaintance of his biographer, Dr. Andrew Bonar, and for twelve weeks at one time, and six weeks at another, laboured with him in a revival in Glasgow.

When meetings, more especially for children and youth, were held in his own church, numbers at times were deeply affected, even to tears; yet some of his office-bearers did not at first feel satisfied that it was a work of God.

But Dr. Bonar for several nights said to them, and to all Christians: "If any of you have doubts about this being the work of God's Spirit, they will flee away as soon

as you go down among these anxious ones and talk and pray with them."

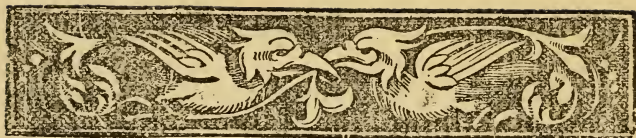
At the end of a week he said, "I had a meeting with my session last evening" (I think eighteen in number), "and am glad to be able to state that I find them all in sympathy with this blessed work of God. Most of them have children among the number of those who are rejoicing in Jesus."

How many lambs are straying,
Lost from the Saviour's fold !
Upon the lonely mountains
They shiver with the cold.
Within the tangled thickets,
Where poison vines do creep,
And over rocky ledges,
Wander the poor lost sheep.

Oh, who will go to find them,
Who, for the Saviour's sake,
Will search, with tireless patience,
Through briar and through brake?
Unheeding thirst and hunger,
Who still, from day to day,
Will seek, as for a treasure,
The lambs that go astray.

How sweet 'twould be at evening,
If you and I could say,
Good Shepherd, we've been seeking
The lambs that went astray ;
Heart-sore, and faint with hunger,
We heard them making moan,
And lo ! we come at nightfall,
Bearing them safely home.

Mrs. E. H. Gates.



CHAPTER V.

ON PREACHING TO THE CHILDREN.

"PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE."

Mark xvi. 15.



HE command, "Preach the Gospel to every creature," seems to me to refer to children as well as to adults.

But many say, "It is not my gift to preach to children." If it is not a natural gift, may it not, to a certain extent, be acquired? Certainly, every minister, and every theological student, may seek to enlist the friendship and interest of the young.

Nathaniel Hawthorne said, "If I value myself on anything, it is on having a smile that children love."

I often heard the name of Dr. Alexander Fletcher mentioned in England. He loved to preach to children. Those who knew him say, that the secret of his power lay in the *boyishness* of his nature. He seemed to carry into manhood all the taste and feelings of his early years. He loved especially to join with the little ones in their sports!

If Paul to the Jews became a Jew, is it not becoming in those who would interest the young to become again children to those that are children?

And I have often observed that the speaker who can

thoroughly interest a crowd of children is sure of securing the attention of the adults.

Vinet says, "A child's book may be a great or beautiful work, and deserve a place of honour in our libraries. Good books for children are the best among the books for men." So good sermons for children are often the best for adults.

Dr. Wm. C. Wisner, of Lockport, N. Y., stated to my wife that a lady, aged over seventy, who had sat under his ministry for many years, was converted at one of the first Children's Meetings I held in his church. Dr. Wisner, as is well known, is one of the strongest men and best preachers in Western New York; and yet some simple illustration for the children, which many would think of little account, was the instrument, under the Spirit of God, of leading her to Christ.

Simplicity should be sought by those who gain the attention of children and win them to Christ.

Dr. Tyng has been in the habit of preaching to the children of his congregation for full twenty years. He says, "It has been one of the most interesting and effective of my labours in the ministry. The Lord has been pleased very graciously and mercifully to own the work as His in many cases of conversion. I have considered no part of my work more valuable and important than this; and certainly no portion of it so popular and acceptable to others."

As has been intimated, it is absolutely necessary in addressing children effectually, first to secure their undivided attention.

To this end it is often essential to seize upon some incident which in itself does not amount to much, and yet which catches the eyes and ears of the children. At the same time, we should not be discouraged if a few restless ones do not seem to hear all that is said.

A little boy on returning from church was severely

censured by his father for not having paid attention to the sermon.

"Father, I heard all the minister said."

"I do not believe it; you were gazing all over the church during the entire service."

"But, father, I heard all the minister said."

"I cannot believe it, for it seemed to me you hardly looked at the preacher; your eyes were oftener fixed upon the rafters than the pulpit."

"But, father, I did hear all he said, and I can tell it to you."

"Let me hear you try it."

He then began, and astonished his father by giving the text, the heads of the sermon, and *much* that was in it.

"I declare," said the father, "you did hear the sermon after all."

"I told you I did, father; and now I CAN TELL YOU EXACTLY HOW MANY RAFTERS THERE ARE IN THE ROOF, FOR I COUNTED EVERY ONE OF THEM DURING THE SERMON!"

In 1861, while holding a series of meetings in Boston, I became intimately acquainted with Rev. Dr. E. N. Kirk, Pastor of Mount Vernon Church. He said to me one day that if he were to live his life over again he would devote much more time to children. He realized the importance of securing their attention, and often, though not especially addressing them, he held their minds throughout the entire discourse. In one of his Addresses he says:

"I have been accustomed to preach and to talk a great deal to the children in my church, and I have some very dear children whom I love very much. There is one little girl I will tell you about, to show you what kind of hearers we want among children. I had noticed her, as she sat in her father's seat in the church, fix her eyes on me as soon as I rose up in the pulpit to begin the

exercises; but I did not know so much about her, till one day, when I was sick and confined to my chamber, her father called to see me, and began to talk about his dear little Mary, who was about nine or ten years of age. Said he, 'Have you ever noticed how my little girl sits in church?' I said I had not particularly noticed any thing but this, that I used to have to turn to that side of the church, because if anyone is preaching, he loves to see every person's eye on him, and, whenever I looked, this little girl's bright eyes were always fixed on me. But her father told me more about her. He said, that from the time I rose in the pulpit, she never turned her head away.

"But here was what struck me with great force about this little girl, one so young; it was the custom of her father, every Sabbath afternoon, after the second service, to go home and get all his children around him, and begin to talk over the sermon of the morning, and then the sermon of the afternoon; they found the text, and each one read it, and then the father would begin to tell what he recollected of the sermon, and then the mother repeated what she recollected, and what he had omitted; and sometimes when they forgot one of the heads of the sermon they would turn to little Mary, and she would recollect it. I was quite surprised; but I have learnt more about little children since then, and I find they can be very profitable hearers of sermons; and ever since that time it has encouraged me, even when I am preaching to grown people, to talk especially to children, because I find that dear little children can understand me; and that is all a minister wants, for the people to understand him, and think about what he says."

Dr. Kirk attended one of the Children's Meetings in Lawrence, Mass., in 1863, and spoke as follows. I quote from a Presbyterian newspaper:

“What amazes me about this movement is, that the children understand what they are about. Though no inquiry meeting was appointed when Mr. Hammond first addressed the children of my congregation, the children *would have one*, and gathered about the speaker in groups. The thing that satisfied me was that the little ones were convinced that they were sinners in not believing in Jesus.

“I believe that I myself might have been converted when eight years old if I had been taught the way. And how much farther and faster I should have got along! In my thirty years’ experience in the examination of applicants for church-membership, I have found it one of the most difficult things to get them to speak the name of *Jesus*, and acknowledge their dependence on *Him*. But the children who are instructed in these meetings seem to know all about Jesus!”

And here it occurs to me to remark, that if we cannot prove positively that meetings were held especially for the conversion of children in the early centuries, we at least have evidence of the sentiment of the Church in relation to children. A Greek hymn of Clement of Alexandria, which was sung in the second century, is thus translated:

“Shepherd of tender youth,
Guiding in love and truth
Through devious ways.
Christ, our triumphant king,
We come Thy name to sing,
*And here our children bring
To shout Thy praise.”*

This would certainly indicate that there were children in those early days who were savingly acquainted with God, and who therefore loved to unite with His people in praising Him.

Irenæus, who lived within one generation of the Apostles, says: "Christ came to save all persons through Himself, all, I say, who through Him are regenerated unto God; infants and little ones, and children and youth, and the aged."

I trust it will not seem out of place now to introduce the report of an address delivered in Newark, New Jersey, the reading of which brought at least one little girl to Christ, and which peradventure may assist some young man in addressing children so as to win them to the Lord Jesus. For such a result I should be thankful.

ADDRESS.

"I want to speak to you this afternoon about JESUS being the CHILD'S GUIDE TO HEAVEN.

"In the grounds of Hampton Court, twelve miles from London, is a labyrinth, in which Henry the Eighth, more than three hundred years ago, used to wander about for his amusement.

"One beautiful afternoon in the autumn, after spending hours among the picture-galleries in the palace, and visiting the room where Oliver Cromwell parted for the last time with his lovely daughter, I wandered away into the park, among the delicate, light-footed deer, and came to this labyrinth.

"I saw people entering it, and heard them say they could find their way out easy enough, and I, too, was led to attempt it. It was very easy to go in a long distance; but when I turned to find my way back, it was a different matter. Whichever path among the high hawthorn hedges I took, I soon reached its end. I could not even find the people whom a little before I saw entering this strange place. I seemed to walk miles, and yet to be no nearer

the end. It was getting dark, and I began to fear I might have to lie down upon the cold ground for the night. All this time a kind man had been standing upon a high tower near by, waiting for me to lift my eyes to him, and ask *him* to guide me out. I quickly said—

“Dear sir, will you please show me the way out of this dark place?”

“Oh, yes,” he replied, and with a long stick he soon helped me to thread my way to the green lawn again.

“How much time and anxiety I might have been saved, if I had only taken this man for my guide out of this winding puzzle! He seemed so glad to help me, he made me think of the dear Jesus, who always stands ready to guide lost sinners in the way to heaven. *His* words, you know, are, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.’ Let us all see if we can find that verse. Yes; here it is; John xiv. 6: ‘Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.’ But have you ever felt, my dear children, that *you* were lost in the dark ways of sin, and that you could not find the way to heaven without the help of Jesus, who died on the cross that He might lead you home to the mansions above? You are surely lost in the dreadful labyrinth of sin, and you will never get out without the help of Jesus.

“And yet some of you have never really asked Him to be your Saviour and Guide, and you are every day going farther and farther away from Him.

“In Rome we followed a guide with a lighted taper down into the Catacombs, which, like this labyrinth of which I have told you, wind in all directions under ground. A little before, a young man had left the guide, and was soon out of hearing. Search was made for him, but it was all in vain. Days and weeks passed away, and at last nothing but his bones were found. How closely the very

thought of it made me cling to our guide. This young man did not expect to be lost, but he never saw the light of day after he left that guide. And I am afraid that some of you may be lost, and never see the light of heaven. You certainly never will, if you do not come to Jesus, and cling close by His side. As that guide in the Catacombs of Rome held a light for us, so Jesus will give you the light of His Word all your journey through, if you will but trust in Him to save you from sin and be your Guide. Will you ask Him to-day? He loves you, and wishes to take you by the hand and lead you along the shining path to happiness and glory. Will you let Him? 'Just now?' And sing with joy, 'Jesus, take me, just now; Jesus, guide me, just now.'

"A few days after my visit to Hampton Court, as I was passing along the streets of London, I fell in with a crowd of anxious people, who were gathered around a little girl on the side-walk. She had wandered away from her home. One object after another had allured her along, until, as she began to look up and around to see where she was, she found she was lost. All was strange to her. She had been running in different directions, but could not find the way to her father's house. And as I saw her she was beginning to cry. Her tears were all in vain, for none of us knew the way to her house. At length a kind gentleman came along, who at once knew her, and pressing his way into the crowd, he took her by the hand, saying,

" 'I know the little girl; I will take her home.'

"He was as willing to be her guide, as was that man by the labyrinth at Hampton to guide me out of the maze.

"The tears of the child were soon brushed away; for she believed that this good man would take her straight to her father and mother.

"During the past few weeks I have seen hundreds of

children awakened to feel that they were *lost* and in need of Jesus, who, a few days before, were as careless and thoughtless as was this little girl in London, before *she* found she was lost; and I have seen them weeping as though their hearts would break. In a day or two many of them had hold of Jesus' hand, and their little hearts were filled with joy.

"A few days ago I found a little boy about eight years of age, in one of these seats at the children's inquiry meeting, sobbing aloud. Said I,

"What's the matter, my dear little fellow?"

"Oh, dear! I'm lost! I'm lost! and I can't find Jesus! Oh! my wicked heart! How can I get a new heart? I have been so wicked! I have never loved Jesus at all! I thought I loved Him, but now I know I never did. Will He take me?"

"Oh, yes!" said I; "He says, 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.'" I tried to tell him how the Lord Jesus died for sinners just like him. At length we kneeled down in one of the pews, and, in a low tone, we prayed together, and the little boy asked God to take away his wicked heart, and help him to love the Saviour; and that little boy, I believe, found *Jesus* to be '*the child's Guide to heaven*,' and he is here to-day, with a smiling face and a singing heart.

"If, indeed, he is following the loving Saviour as his Friend and Guide, you will see a change in that boy's life.

"This little boy's face to-day, like many others here, is lit up with a radiant joy that is far brighter than that which shone from the face of the little girl in London, when on her way home. I have no doubt some of the parents here to-day scarcely believe that their children are at enmity with the gracious Saviour; perhaps they have never found out by experience that the Bible is true, when it says, 'The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.' I pray

that they may learn, as many of you have learnt, that it is a very wicked thing not to love that dear Jesus who 'first loved us.' Here is a letter from a little boy whom I found, in a children's inquiry meeting in Brooklyn, weeping and asking how he could get a new heart. He says, '*I thought I loved Jesus, but I found I was a great sinner.*'

"I will read it to you, and I trust the Christians present will be lifting up their hearts to God, that all here may find what great sinners they are to reject the loving Saviour :

"*I was always in the habit of coming to Sunday school, and I thought I loved Jesus, until you came and told us about Him ; and I found that I was a great sinner to reject that loving Saviour, who suffered so much for me. At the first meeting I did not care much, until a kind lady in the inquiry meeting came and asked me if I loved Jesus : I did not make her any answer, for there were other boys in the seat with me. So she sat down and talked with us a long time, and said she would pray for us, and it was then I commenced to feel that I was a sinner, and if I did not repent of my sins, I could never enter heaven ; and when I went home, I asked God to give me a new heart, and make me to love that Saviour who died for me ; and when I got up off my knees, I felt so happy that I could not help singing. But still I did not say anything, for I thought the boys would laugh at me ; and you said we ought not to be ashamed of Jesus, for if we were ashamed of Him, we could not be His lambs. So when I went home, I prayed to God to help me not to be ashamed of Jesus. He has answered my prayer, and has given me a new heart, and I do not think I will ever be ashamed of Him again. I feel very happy now since I have found Jesus. There are other boys and girls who have found Jesus ; and oh ! I do love to be at our little prayer-meetings, for I think that when we get to heaven we shall be far happier. I love to read my Bible now, and before I found Jesus I never thought of it, except when I was in Sunday-school. But I love it now, and I will always love it ; and I love to pray to Jesus for others and myself. Pray for me.*

"*'YOUR YOUNG FRIEND.'*

"You see how happy this dear boy is, now that he has found Jesus to be '*the child's Guide to heaven.*' He says he

asked God for a new heart, and He gave it to him, and he was so happy that he could not help singing. Can some of you tell me what a new heart is? (Up fly dozens of little hands). Well, what is it?"

One little boy answers—"It is a penitent heart."

"What else is a new heart?" "It is a Jesus-trusting heart."

"Any other answer?" "It is a sin-hating heart." Another: "It is a singing heart."

"And what else is a new heart?" Another answers—"It is a praying heart."

"Yes, you see this little boy says, 'I love to pray to Jesus for others and myself.' Ah, I see another hand up. Well, what is your definition of a new heart?"

"It is a working heart."

"Very good. This boy, too, must have had a working heart; you see he did all he could to get others to follow Jesus, the 'Guide to heaven.' Are there any more answers?"

"A Bible-loving heart."

"Very good. If a Bible-loving heart is a new heart, then this boy in Brooklyn must have had a new heart, for you see he says, 'I love to read my *Bible* now, and before I found Jesus I never thought of it, except when in Sabbath-school. Are there any other answers?"

"A new heart," said a little girl, "is a *happy* heart."

"Oh, how true! None of us can be really happy till we find Jesus and get a new heart; and we shall all find it to be truly a 'happy heart.' And this is another evidence that this boy had a new heart; for he says, 'I was so *happy* I could not help singing.' Let us count up some of these evidences of a new heart; we will place them like

gold rings upon our fingers. Here, then, is the first on the left little finger. What was it?"

Several answer—"A penitent heart." "A Jesus-trusting heart." "A sin-hating heart." "A singing heart."

"What next?" "A praying heart."

"Yes; and what was the name of the 'gold ring' for the fifth finger?" "A working heart."

"The sixth?" "A Bible-loving heart."

"And what for the next?" "A happy heart."

"Yes, and I see numbers here to-day whose happy faces seem to show that they have this new, singing, praying, Bible-loving, working, happy heart. Some of you, who, only a few days ago, were weeping to think how your sins helped to nail the hands of the dear Saviour to the cruel cross, I saw at work yesterday in the children's inquiry meeting, and by your words and prayers trying to lead others to trust in the Saviour. I am glad some of you seem to have the 'working heart.'

"I pray that the sight of these many happy faces may pierce the hard hearts of some older ones here to-day, and lead them to trust in Jesus as their Saviour and Guide. I have in my pocket a letter from a lady in Hamilton, in Canada, who was first startled to think of her lost condition by having a friend say to her at one of the Children's Meetings:

"'How happy these children seem! It makes me happy to look at them.'

"It led her to ask the question:

"'Am I happy? No! I have all that this world can give; but I am not happy.'

"In a few days she was among the happy young converts, and was able to rejoice in the 'love of Christ, which passeth knowledge' (Eph. iii. 19).

"Now, my dear little friends, do you want this *new*

heart? The moment you believe in Jesus, you have it. Let us all turn to Ezekiel xxxvi. 26. There it says, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.' Our Lord will not lead you one step towards heaven till you come to Him, and get rid of that hard, stony heart. While many have felt happy here to-day, and joined heartily in singing these sweet hymns, I have noticed that numbers were at times in tears. I believe that the Holy Spirit has been showing some of you that you are *lost*, and that you have wicked, hard hearts. And what I am afraid of is, that you will be satisfied with trying to get a *better* heart, instead of coming at once to Jesus for a *new* heart. You see the promise in this verse is not for a *better* heart, but for a *new* heart.

"A gentleman once bought a valuable gold watch ; but it did not keep time. He did not know by it when to go home to his dinner ; he thus sometimes lost his meals. He took it back to the watchmaker. He looked at it with his magnifying glass, and tried to find what the matter was ; but it was all in vain. He said to the gentleman,

" 'It is a perfect watch, and must keep time.'

"He took it home, and tried it again, but still with no success. He went back with it, quite angry, saying, 'I will not have it ; I don't care if it is full of jewels, it will not keep time, and that is what I want a watch for.'

"At length the watchmaker found that one of the wheels was magnetized. Did he place it on his little anvil, and try to make it better ? No. He took it *out* and threw it away, and put a *new* wheel in its place, and then the watch kept good time. And that is just what you must ask God to do for you, and He will, for Christ's sake, take away that bad wheel in your hearts and give you a new wheel (a new heart) that will regulate all your actions by motives

which you have never known before. You will then love the Lord, and delight to follow Him as your 'Guide to heaven.'

"This is the way to get those five gold rings, and this will make you rich in time and eternity. In the thirty-seventh verse in this same chapter in Ezekiel, you are told how to get that new heart: 'Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of.' Yes, if you ask in faith, you will get all your sins forgiven, and a *new* heart, so that you will then hate sin. You see, my dear children, I have been trying to show those of you who are not Christians, that you are *lost* in the dark ways of *sin*; and I have told you how others found the way to Jesus, 'the Guide to heaven,' and how, when they trusted Him, they had a new heart given them, and were made happy and were sure of being led all the way to His blissful presence above.

"You love to sing the sweet hymns and hear the stories. But who, of those who come here day after day, really love Jesus? Like this boy whose letter we read, you may think you do; but you may be mistaken, as he was at first. Do you give the same evidence of having a new heart? I have been trying to show you how easy it is to come to Christ and be saved. But oh! it was not such an easy thing for our Lord to suffer for us, that He might save us from our sins, and guide us to heaven.

"Let us open our Bibles, and spend a few moments in following the steps of our dear Saviour from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross of Calvary. In Luke xxii. 42, 44, we hear Him saying,

"'Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.'

"The thought of being treated as a sinner, and having God

turn His face away from Him, made the bloody sweat pour down His brows. But, oh, dear children, He saw that there was no other way for us to be saved, and He loved us so much that He was willing to die for us ! and so, in Matt. xxvi. 42, we hear Him saying,

“ ‘Thy will be done.’ ”

“Let us read on in this twenty-second chapter of Luke, forty-fifth verse,

“ ‘When He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye ? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. And while He yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss ?’ ”

“We learn from the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the eighteenth chapter of John, that

“ ‘The captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him, and led Him away to Annas first.’ ”

“In the fifty-fourth verse of Luke xxii. we see Him again taken and led to Caiaphas the high priest’s house. And we see, at the sixty-third verse, how cruelly they treated the Son of God, who made all things :

“ ‘The men that held Jesus mocked Him, and smote Him. And when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote Thee ?’ ”

“In Mark xiv. 65, it says,

“ ‘Some began to spit on Him, . . . and to buffet Him ;’ ”

“that is, they struck Him with the clenched fist,

“ ‘And the servants did strike Him with the palms of their hands,

“Oh, how wonderful that He should have borne all so meekly and willingly for you and me! And what hard hearts we must have not to love Him in return! But this was not all. In the first verse of the twenty-third chapter of Luke,

“‘The whole multitude of them arose, and led Him unto Pilate; and they began to accuse Him.’

“Fourth verse,

“‘Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this Man. And they were the more fierce.’

“Oh! how like ravening wolves they thirsted for His blood, saying,

“‘He stirreth up the people . . . throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.’

“When Pilate heard that He

“‘Belonged unto Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod.’

“And now, in the eleventh verse, we see that after a mock trial,

“‘Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate.’

“In John xix. we see how this cruel Roman officer treated the Son of God.

“‘Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him;’

“with a great scourge he caused Him to be lashed, till, no doubt, big drops of blood ran down His back.

“Second verse :

“‘And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote Him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him.’

"No, my dear children, if Pilate could have justly found any fault in Christ, He could never have been our Guide to heaven. He never did one wrong thing in all His life. Yes, He who knew no sin was made sin for us.

" 'Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe.'

"The crown-jewels which encircled Queen Victoria's brow are guarded by wakeful eyes, day and night, in the great Tower of London. They cost millions of dollars. Crowds daily flock to see them. But Jesus, the King of kings, wore this cruel crown of thorns that you and I, rebels against God, might wear a crown of glory. Sixth verse :

" 'When the chief priests therefore and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, Crucify Him.'

"Sixteenth verse :

" 'And they took Jesus, and led Him away. And He bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha : where they crucified Him.'

"They laid the cross down upon the ground and then took some nails, and drove them through His hands and feet. Hark ! can you not almost hear the hammer as it drives those rusty spikes through His sensitive hands ? Legions of angels are ready to deliver Him, and are able to destroy those wicked men. But no ; the Son of God is being

" 'Wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities ;'

"for only by His stripes can we be healed. In agony of soul more than of body, He cries :

" 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?'

"He was forsaken for our sake.

"And the words of Jesus to you, are :

“ ‘Look unto Me, and be ye saved ’ (Isa. xlv. 22).

“IT SEEMS SO STRANGE TO ME, THAT WHEN CHRIST HAS DONE SO MUCH FOR US, THERE SHOULD BE ANY HERE WHO DO NOT LOVE HIM. An anxious little girl among the inquirers in Dundee, in Scotland, where the holy Robert McCheyne was so dearly loved by the children, said in an inquiry meeting that her heart was so wicked she could not love the Saviour. She seemed to feel her sins to be very great, but declared she could not love Jesus. As she appeared to have learned that she needed an entirely ‘new heart,’ and not a ‘better heart,’ we began to tell her more about what Christ had done for lost sinners. In a few moments she looked up with a happy smile, saying,

“ ‘I CAN’T HELP LOVING HIM. OH, I WONDER I NEVER LOVED HIM BEFORE, WHEN HE LOVED ME SO MUCH AS TO BE WILLING TO SUFFER PUNISHMENT AND DEATH FOR ME.’

“Why, if an earthly friend had done half as much for you as has this One, who so ‘well deserves the name of Friend,’ I am *sure* you would not be so ungrateful as not to love Him in return.

“This reminds me of a touching story about a party who determined to climb to the top of Mount Washington, more than six thousand feet high. But they rejected THE GUIDE. Just as this party of ladies and gentlemen were leaving the hotel at the foot of Mount Washington, the proprietor urged them to take one of his guides.

“ ‘We do not wish a guide,’ they said. ‘We are determined to find our own way to the “Tip-top House.”’

“ ‘But,’ said he, ‘I will let you have one for half price.’

“ ‘No ; we do not want one, even at half price. We can find our way well enough alone. We will follow the path, and so will soon find our way to the hotel at the top of the mountain, and there we shall get a good supper and all we need

“‘You may get lost,’ said the hotel-keeper, ‘without a guide ; and rather than have you go alone, I will send with you, all the way, a good faithful guide for nothing.’

“‘No, we won’t have him, even for nothing ; we want to do something that will astonish our friends.’

“‘But it is very dangerous.’

“‘We are strong, and will risk it.’

“‘Suppose you find yourselves in a snow-storm, what would the ladies do?’

“One of them laughed, and said, ‘That would be very nice. A snow-storm in summer : I hope we *shall* see one.’

“‘Yes, yes !’ they shouted ; ‘then we will roll up some snow-balls, and see them go rushing down the mountain side till they become small avalanches.’

“And so, with hearts full of hope, they started off for the top of Mount Washington. On they went, gay as larks, for a few miles, till they got near the top and they saw a white cloud above them. Up, up they went into it. They found what I have often seen in Switzerland, a snow-storm among the mountains, while the sun was pouring its warm rays upon the people in the valley below.

“‘Isn’t this fun?’ said one and another. And so it was for a short time ; but after a while the snow became so deep they could not see the path. Ah ! then the ‘fun’ was at an end, and they began to think of the warning words of the proprietor of the hotel, who offered them a guide.

“‘Oh ! how I wish we had that guide now!’ said one.

“But it’s too late to go back for him ; we must find our way alone,’ said another. And so they struggled on, sometimes going quite out of the way.

“Darkness came, and they were LOST ! LOST in the deep snow ! But they kept moving upward as well as they could. The two ladies got so tired they could not walk another

step. It was dreadfully cold, and so they sank down in the deep, cold snow, and waited for daylight to come to show them the way to the 'Tip-top House.' In the morning, the storm had all cleared away, and as the keepers of that house looked out, they saw only a little way off, not much more than a stone's throw, the half-buried party. They went to them at once, but it was too late to save the life of one beautiful young lady, who had been *frozen to death* during that awful night, and all because she, with the rest, had said, '*We don't want the guide.*'

"When I was at the top of Mount Washington, a few summers ago, I saw a great pile of stones, which had been thrown together over the spot where this young lady was found *cold in death*.

"How foolish they were not to accept the guide. But suppose they had taken him, and he had lost his life just as he had got them all safe in the warm hotel, how would the party have felt toward him? Jesus, who is 'the child's Guide to heaven,' had to die a dreadful death on the cross before He could lead sinful children to heaven. Yes, my dear little friend, He died in *your place*, so that God might forgive *you* all your sins.

"And now He is ready to take you with Him all through the journey of life, safely home to the *Golden City*.

"One day, as the train entered the station at Rochester, New York, I saw a crowd of people gathering around a little boy, whom the conductor was leading out of one of our cars. Everybody in that crowd seemed anxious to get even a look at the little fellow; and so I waited around to find out what it was all about. Soon a young gentleman, who knew me, came and told me something that interested me very much, and I think it will interest you too, my little friends, when you hear the story.

"This boy, who did not look over *three years old*, had

been off alone, twenty miles on the railway. And what do you think took him off so far alone? 'How came his mother to let him go?' I can hear you ask. But she did not let him go; he ran away down to the station all alone, and got into the train by himself, just as it was starting, and away went the little man twenty miles before anybody knew where he was.

"But now you say, 'What made him do such a strange thing?' I will tell you.

"He loved his father very much, because his father used to be very kind to him, and bring him home toys, and play-things, and picture-books, and candies, and lots of good things. He thought there was nobody quite so good as his father, and he felt sure nobody loved him so much. But his father had some business in California, thousands of miles away, and so one day he told his wife and children that he must leave them all and go there. Little Frankie at once said, 'Can't I go with you, papa?'

"'No, my child; it is too far to go with me.' This made the little fellow cry bitterly. When the time came for the father to set out, little Frankie was not allowed to go to the railway station with him. But after awhile he found a way to get out, and off he scampered to the station with all his might. Just as he reached there he saw a train about to start, and he thought, of course, that his father must be in that train, and into it the little boy climbed, and went all through the car, looking for his dear father. After he had ridden about twenty miles, the conductor chanced to get hold of him: and, having found out his name, telegraphed back to his mother, and then gave him to a conductor of a train they met, and thus he was taken back to Rochester to his home. It was his own brother who told me all this.

"And what do you think I thought of, when I looked upon the face of that persevering little fellow, and knew how

determined he had been to find his father, and go with him to California? I will tell you.

“I said to myself, ‘Oh! I wish that little children, even as young as three or four years old, were everywhere so anxious to go with the CHILD’S GUIDE TO HEAVEN. He has done ten thousand times more for them than ever that father did for little Frankie.’ This dear Saviour loves you, my little friends, more than that father loved his little boy, Frankie; and He is the only One that can take you home to your Father in heaven. He is also willing to give you a new heart, so that you will love God and all good things.

“You remember that poor little Frankie was disappointed because he could not go with his father; but there never was a boy or girl who really wanted to go with Jesus, but that He was READY TO TAKE THEM, AND MAKE THEM FIT FOR A USEFUL AND HAPPY LIFE HERE, AND A JOYFUL LIFE IN HEAVEN FOR EVER.

“But, as we saw when I was reading the Bible, before Jesus could offer Himself as our Guide, He had to die in our stead that dreadful death on the cross; there He had to suffer for our sins that we might be forgiven. And yet there are some here to-day who, I fear, do not love Him at all. You hate Him; you speak lightly of Him; you profane His name; you are ashamed of Him. Perhaps yesterday you were unwilling your own dear mother should know you wanted to find the way to heaven. You have often heard how He loved you, and yet you have never loved Him in return. Does not this show that you have wicked hearts? Some of you I see are in tears. But weeping will not save you. All that you can do is to confess all this—confess that you have been very wicked in not loving Him at all, when He has loved you so much. Here is a precious promise for you in 1 John i. 9: ‘If we confess our sins, He is

faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

"Will you not say,

" 'Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come !' ?

"Yes, the dear Jesus is here, full of love ; He sees your tears ; He sees you wandering in the dark labyrinth of sin ; He hears all your sighs ; His tender, loving words are, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest' (Matt. xi. 28). How can you reject Him when He so gently knocks at the door of your heart ?

"Shall we then at this moment bow our heads in prayer and 'come to Jesus' ? Will you repeat after me these words ? [All bowed their heads, and, in a subdued tone, repeated aloud after Mr. H——, one by one, these sentences of prayer] :

"Dear Lord, we come to Thee with all our sins.—We have been very wicked.—We have told lies, and disobeyed our parents, and done many wicked things.—But, worst of all, we have not loved Thee.—We have often rejected Thee.—Our sins helped to crucify Thee.—And yet Thou wast willing to die for us.—Thou wast 'wounded for our transgressions.'—Thou art able to save unto the uttermost.—Thou hast said, O God ! that if we confess our sins, 'Thou art faithful, for Jesus' sake, to forgive us.—O God ! we do confess our sins.—We would repent of them.—We would wish to forsake them.—O God, help us to be sorry for our sins, and to believe in the Lord Jesus, who died on the cross for sinners like us.—Dear Saviour, show us Thy love, so that we cannot help loving Thee.—Thy blood cleanseth

from all sin.—Lord, we believe, help Thou our unbelief.—
Help each of us to say from the heart—

“Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come !”

“Yes, Thou Lamb of God, we give ourselves away to Thee ; 'tis all that we can do.—Strengthen our dear ministers and our Sabbath-school teachers.—Reward them for their faithfulness to us.—May we all, at last, meet around the throne of God in heaven.—For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.”

THE “CHILDREN'S BAND” IN LONDON.

I clipped from “The Independent” (New York) some time ago an account, written by the Rev. Newman Hall, concerning what he calls the “Children's Band” in London. It bears upon the subject of this chapter so directly that it can but prove instructive.

Mr. Hall's article was written several years after the commencement of this work among the children, and yet he says :—

“DURING THE PRESENT YEAR I HAVE HAD THE FULLEST SATISFACTION IN WELCOMING TO THE LORD'S TABLE, FROM THESE SERVICES, FIFTEEN ; SIX OF WHOM WERE THIRTEEN YEARS OLD, ONE TWELVE, ONE ELEVEN.”

Here is the extract :

“Let me refer to a conference held in our schoolroom on the subject of special religious services for children. And I cannot do better than simply relate some facts which were given by Mr. Tyler, a devoted young man, who consecrates his life to the good work of feeding Christ's lambs. Mr Hammond, from America, visited us in 1867 ; and his

manner of urging the claims of Jesus on the young left a deep impression on many minds. After his visit, children who felt so disposed were invited to attend a special religious service every Sunday and Tuesday evening. They came of their own accord, without teachers. The hymns, prayers, and addresses were calculated to inspire and impress their minds. It was felt that there should be some method by which those who really loved Jesus might be able to confess Him, and also enjoy the advantage of the sympathy of each other. So the 'Christian Band' was formed. Papers were given to the children on which these four questions were printed—Do you love Jesus? Are you trusting in Jesus as your own precious Saviour? Will you try by the help of Jesus to give up everything sinful? Will you try to be more and more like Jesus every day?

"To these questions was prefixed the inquiry, 'Dear little friend, can you answer Yes?' Each child was asked to bring back the paper with answers. Some were not returned at all. Others came back with such replies as these:

"To the first question: 'Yes, with joy I can say I love Him.' 'Yes, with all my heart.' 'Yes, because He died for me.' 'Yes, because He loves me so.' 'Yes, but I should like to love Him more.' 'I will try with my whole heart.'

"To the second question: 'Yes, I feel He is my precious Saviour.' 'Yes, I will try.' 'I am afraid not,' etc.

"To the third: 'Yes, I will pray to Him to help me' (by a little girl of eight years, since gone to Him)! 'Yes, I will try more and more.'

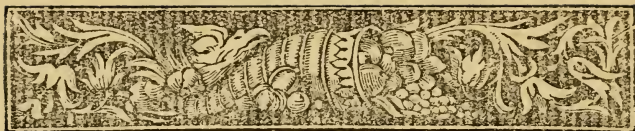
"To the fourth: 'Yes, I wish to be more like Him.' 'Yes, I will,' etc. Those who brought back the papers were asked to remain after the rest had gone. Special

prayer was offered, and responded to sentence by sentence ; a simple prayer of consecration.

“ This Christian Band of young disciples meet once a month, when the names of those who have joined during the month are read out. They are specially watched over by the conductors of the services, and, at their own desire from time to time, are recommended to the pastor for church fellowship, still, however, continuing attendance at their own special meetings.

“ During the present year I have had the fullest satisfaction in welcoming to the Lord's table fifteen from these services ; six of whom were thirteen years old, one twelve, and one eleven. But this does not indicate the total result to the Church, for the services are unsectarian. The children come from the district, and are encouraged to unite themselves with any church which their parents or friends prefer. Some may fear that the impression produced will in most cases prove transitory. To aid in forming a correct judgment, inquiry has been made respecting the first fifty who joined the Christian Band three years ago. Of these, ten are church members, twenty are still regular and consistent members of the ‘ Band,’ seven belong to the Episcopal Church and are not visited lest it should be thought there was a wish to proselytise, two attend a Wesleyan chapel with their parents, nine have left the neighbourhood, one sleeps in Jesus, one is unsatisfactory yet often penitent.

“ These children often speak to their companions and invite them to the meeting, and urge them to love Jesus. They hold prayer-meetings, at which the petitions indicate the fullest trust in the efficacy of prayer. A friend overheard the following : ‘ Please, Lord, make me a good girl. Bless my father and bless my mother ; and O Lord, do send father some *work*. ’ ”




CHAPTER VI.

HOW EARLY MAY CONVERTED CHILDREN JOIN THE CHURCH?

WORDS OF JESUS :

"TAKE HEED THAT YE DESPISE NOT ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES.
Matt. xviii. 10.

"THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."
Luke xxii. 19.

"EED MY LAMBS." This is a subject of very tender interest to me. The little babe after it is born needs the solicitous care of the mother and nurse. Just so little "babes in Christ" need to be cared for most tenderly. A shepherd who had a fine flock of sheep, was once asked how it was he had such beautiful sheep. His answer was, "I TAKE CARE OF THE LAMBS."

Dr. Butler, in Auburn, Maine, once told me that twenty-two years before, in a place where he had been a pastor, a large number of children had been converted. Grave doubts were expressed as to the propriety of receiving them into the Church. He had no little difficulty in inducing the officials to receive them; but at last they were led to do so. "And," said he, "I am thankful for it. They are to-day pillars of that Church."

I believe that children converted should be gathered and instructed by themselves week by week. Sometimes I

have observed that pastors have selected several earnest Christian men and women, and given them the care of fifteen or twenty of these new-born souls, and that those friends have convened the children each week at their houses for instruction. Thus the little ones have been led along step by step in the divine life. It is well, also, to encourage the little ones to attend the weekly Church prayer-meetings.

Lorenzo Dow used to say that a good farmer would always put the hay so low in the racks that even the little lambs could get some of it. And so it seems to me that spiritual food should be so dealt out that little children should be enabled to grasp it and grow thereby.

The Church of God is the place for all of His children, both old and young, and thither these little ones should be brought.

Rev. Dr. Hawley, of Auburn, N.Y., once told me that he had in his Church a little girl who was early converted. She came before the session for examination. In order to satisfy his elders he asked her some pretty severe questions, but she answered them with much clearness. Finally, he said to her :

“You are a very little girl ; only nine years old. What would you think if we should deem it best for you to remain a few years out of the Church, until you are older?”

The little thing burst into tears, and said :

“I want to obey all of Christ's commands, and He has said, ‘This do in remembrance of Me.’”

What was it but the Spirit of God that taught her that these words were applicable to little children as well as to adults ! It is a great comfort for me to believe that the Holy Spirit can adapt His teachings to the understanding of little children.

A number of years ago, in the city of Washington, a friend of mine, as he was leaving the house to preach a

sermon in a series of meetings, observed a little girl running through the hall, and heard her say :

"Mamma, I want to go to meeting to-night ; I want to be a Christian !"

"Why, you are only six years old," replied her mother. "Your bed-time is seven o'clock, the meeting will not be out until nine or ten o'clock."

"But, mamma, I want to go to church to-night and learn to love Jesus, as the rest are doing."

My friend turned to the child and said :

"You can give your heart to Jesus here at home."

She replied quickly, "I will."

When they returned, the little girl came bounding through the hall, exclaiming—

"I have done it ! I have done it !"

"What have you done ?" asked her mother.

"Why, I have given myself to Jesus, and I know He has received me. I am *so* happy."

Little notice was taken of the occurrence, for neither the mother nor the preacher believed the child understood the import of the words she used. Three weeks afterwards the pastor gave notice that anyone who had been recently converted should, on a certain day, present themselves for examination. Little Clara found her way to the examination room at the appointed time. The pastor said to her,

"What are you here for, my child ?"

"Why, I have come here to be examined."

"Examined for what ?"

"To join the Church."

"But you are too young. How old are you ?"

"I am six years old."

"That is too young."

Looking up inquiringly into the pastor's face, she continued,

“You come to our Sunday-school, and you tell us to come to Jesus ; you say that He died on the cross for us ; and that if we will trust in Him, God, for His sake, will forgive us our sins, and give us new hearts, and make us happy. *How old must children be before they can become Christians ?*”

These words puzzled the minister and the officers. They found *they were getting examined*, and a question had been asked at the very beginning too difficult for them to solve.

Finally, they were forced to examine her, which they **did** with reluctance. The pastor then said :

“We believe you have been converted ; but you are so very young we feel we cannot admit you into the Church for several years.”

And thus the poor child was left out in the cold for three long years. It is a wonder she did not freeze to death. But after these years she was found alive and taken into the Church, and is now an earnest Christian mother in the city of Washington.

If there is a blessing connected with the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, I cannot see why children should be debarred the privilege of joining with God's people in that ordinance.

Mr. Spurgeon once said that he had been in the habit of receiving thirty or forty children into his Church every year ; that he had found it necessary to excommunicate one or two adults in that time, but that he had never yet found it necessary to dismiss one received in the early years of childhood.

Dr. Shaw, of Rochester, New York, has said that for twenty-five years he has been in the habit of taking children into his Church, and he never regretted having done so.

The nature of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper should be fully explained in a very simple manner, so that children can understand it ; and then, if they desire to connect them-

selves with God's people, they should not be hindered. He who *hinders* is in danger of hearing the Saviour's warning, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

We should not expect too much of these little children. I remember once hearing of the officer of a church who was very much opposed to a certain boy being received into fellowship; whenever it was proposed he strongly objected. But at last the pastor's good counsel prevailed and the boy was received. The next morning the pastor heard the door-bell ring as if the house were on fire. Hastily dressing himself, he descended, and found the office-bearer, out of breath, and greatly excited.

"That boy you took into the Church," said he, "I saw coming down the hill this morning *playing horse as hard as he could!* I guess that is the end of HIS religion!"

This good man, it appears, was greatly troubled because the little boy was taking exercise in the pure morning air.

"They will," says Dr. Bushnell, "as many of us do, live a mixed life, sinning and repenting; but let us not, on this account, debar them from the privilege of assembling themselves with God's people at stated times, to commemorate the dying love of Jesus."

In some places to which I have returned after a revival, I have found the little ones wandering about like strayed lambs upon the mountains. When I have asked them if they were not Christians, they have hesitatingly said,

"I thought I was when you were here, but I fear I was not."

"Did you join the Church?"

"No, sir; I wanted to, but my father (or pastor, or some one) said I was too young; and when I fell into sin,

my brother pointed his finger at me and said, 'You are a pretty Christian; you are no more one than I am!' so I have often been led to fear that I was not converted."

"Do you love to pray?" "Oh, yes!"

"Do you love God's people?"

"Yes, I love to be with them."

The whole trouble with the children who talk in this way is just here; they were converted, they want to join the Church, but for one reason or another they are not allowed to do so. And thus they become discouraged, and almost abandon their hope in Christ.

Upon returning to other places *where the children have been watched over*, and after being carefully examined have been *received into the Church*, I have been delighted to find them daily growing in grace, and able clearly to give a reason for the hope that is in them.

Those who have not been in the habit of entering into close conversation with converted children would be astonished to find the clearness with which they give evidence that they have passed from death unto life. For the sake of such I will here introduce a conversation which I held with a little boy about nine years old, in the Rev. Baptist Noel's church in London, in 1867, and whom I found lingering in the chapel after the congregation was dismissed:

"Why do you look so happy, my boy?"

"I think it is because I have found Jesus."

"But what makes you think you have found Him?"

"Oh, I *know* I have."

"But how do you know? We read in 1 Peter iii. 15, 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.' Now what is your reason for thinking that *you* are a Christian?"

"Because I know that He has forgiven me all my sins."

"But have you *really felt* that you were a sinner?"

"Oh, yes ; I have felt that many times. I know I have done many wicked things."

"What wicked things have you done?"

"Oh, I have told lies, and disobeyed my parents. But the other night, when I heard you tell of how Jesus Christ died such a dreadful death on the cross for us, I felt I was a great sinner not to love Him for

I felt ashamed that I had never thanked Him for His great love to me. If He had not been 'wounded for my transgressions,' I know I must have been lost for ever. It made me cry to think that I had been so wicked as not to love Him."

"And did you repent of this sin?"

"Oh, yes, I was very sorry for it, and I asked Him to forgive me."

"But did He forgive you?" "Oh, yes."

"How do you know?"

"I know it, because I heard you read out of the Bible, 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;' and I confessed my sins : so I know He forgave me."

"But are there no other reasons why you think you are a Christian? What do you love now that you did not love before?"

"Oh, I love Jesus, and I never thought so much about Him before. I feel that He is near me almost all the time. I think about Him when I first wake up in the morning."

"And is there anything else that you love that you did not love before?"

"Yes ; I love to pray. Before, I just *said* my prayers, because my mother taught them to me ; but after I received a new heart I loved to pray. And sometimes I pray now as I walk the streets : I pray for my little friends that they may love Jesus and be as happy as I am."

"Is there nothing else that you love now, that you did not love before? Do you not love the Bible now?"

"Oh, yes, very much ; I love to read it as often as I can. I could not understand it before, but now I love to hear it read. Every morning, when papa reads it, I listen to every word."

"What part of it do you love best?"

"The New Testament, where we are told how Jesus died for us."

"Tell me how you feel towards those who you think are Christians."

"I love to be with them. If I know they love Jesus, then I love them very much."

"In John's first Epistle iii. 14, we read : 'WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE, BECAUSE WE LOVE THIR BRETHREN.' Now, if you, my little friend, have repented of your sins and have come to Christ for pardon ; if you love the dear Saviour,

and love the Bible, and love God's people, then it would be quite right for you to say ; *' I know that I have passed from death unto life, because I love the brethren.'* If this is all true that you have told me, then it was quite right for you to answer me in the way you did when I asked you what made you so happy. But what are you going to do when the devil tempts you to do wrong ?"

"Pray to God to help me to do right."

"But what if you forget to pray, and so do wrong almost before you think of it? What if you get angry and say some naughty words almost before you know it? What will you do then?"

"I shall go and tell God I am very sorry, and ask Him to forgive me."

"But suppose something says to you, 'You are not a Christian. for if you had been you would not have displeased Jesus. What will you do then?'"

This seemed to trouble the little boy, and then I said to him:

"For the first few months after I gave myself to Christ, I used to find so much sin in my heart that I often scarcely dared to hope that I was a Christian ; and Satan often at such times said to me : ' You are no Christian ;' but then I remembered that Jesus had said, in John vi. 37, ' Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out ;' and so I used to go at once to Him and say : ' Dear Saviour, even if I was deceived before, I give myself to Thee now. Oh, take me, and make me Thine own obedient child.' And He always took me back to His loving bosom. And whenever Satan tempts you to think that you are not a Christian, if you will go to Jesus, I am sure He will receive you. But if you live near to Him and pray to Him every day, and seek to obey His commands, you will not be filled with doubts and fears, but you will be happy all the time."

While at Ocean Grove I found there had been a work of grace going on among the children before I arrived. They had what they called a "child's church," into which children giving evidence of having experienced a change of heart were gathered.

A few years ago, while spending a day or two at Saratoga, a lady left her card at the hotel where I was stopping. I did not remember the name, but soon after called at her

hotel. Though I did not find her in, two little children whom I saw in the drawing-room came running to me and expressed great delight at seeing me. I found that they were members of a Sunday-school in Brooklyn, and had attended the meetings I had held in that city a year before. After a pleasant chat with the children, I asked them if they still loved Jesus. They said,

"Oh, yes! we have loved Him ever since those meetings, and been happy all the time."

"Have you joined the Church?" I inquired.

"Oh, no," answered the little girl of twelve. "I wanted to, but mother would not let me——"

"And so did I," said the little seven-year-old, "but mother would not let *me* either."

They both burst into tears. Just at that moment their mother entered, and was astonished to find her children weeping. Instead of answering her question as to the cause of their tears, I beckoned her to accompany me to the verandah, and asked her if she thought her children were Christians. Her answer was,

"I have no doubt of it. They were converted at those meetings you held in Dr. Cuyler's church in Brooklyn. They have never ceased to love the Saviour, and they are consistent in their lives."

"Have they joined the Church?" I asked.

"Oh, no; they are too young for that. They wanted to, but we did not think it best."

Said I, "That is the cause of their tears. They told me they desired to join the Church, but you would not let them."

I once said to Mr. Moody that I had sometimes thought I would give my whole time up to children, it being so much easier to lead them to Christ.

"Oh," said he, "that *would be cruel*. You should always remain in a place until the *Christians' hearts are*

thoroughly warmed, so that they will take care of the little children." I felt the truth of it, for why should living children be given to dead parents?

AT WHAT AGE IS IT SAFE TO ADMIT CHILDREN INTO THE CHURCH?

It cannot be answered in a word, for children differ so much in intelligence and capacity. Some are more mature at five years of age than others at ten.

"What is the age," writes a pastor, "of the youngest child you know of that has been admitted to the communion of the Lord's Supper? A little lad in my congregation, between eight and nine years old, has found the Saviour, and obtained from Him a new heart. He comes into my Young Men's Prayer Meeting, held in my study every night. We think his case very interesting; he is very bright and intelligent.

The following letter, which I received from a little child in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, suggests an answer to the above. It seems that she was but six years of age when she was admitted to the Lord's table. She is now eleven years of age. A minister who has known her during these five years told me she has lived a consistent Christian life.

She tells her own story in these words, which I copy from her letter:

"When I was six years old I felt I loved Jesus, and have been trying to keep His word. My father was then stationed at Jersey Shore, and I asked him to let me join the Church, which he did, on probation. I served my probationship there. I joined the class my ma belonged to, and have been trying to live for Jesus, though I often do things I should not do; but I pray to God to forgive me, and I know He does, for I feel it.

"On the 8th of January my dear pa died. He was stationed here at Pine Street Methodist Episcopal Church. A short time before he died, he wished to see us little children. I wept so when I saw he would die. He said, 'Don't cry, Allie, you'll come to heaven some time, and see your papa there.' I am trying to meet him in heaven. Pray for me."

While I write, a mother tells me that her daughter joined the Church when she was eight years of age, and that she has followed Jesus faithfully for eleven years. She also tells me that at one time, eleven of her nieces and nephews joined the Church before they were twelve years of age, and that now, after eight years, they each honour their profession.

When in Baltimore I became acquainted with Rev. Richard Fuller, D.D., who has since gone to his reward. He loved to see children coming to the Saviour. He says: "I once thought I was doing God service in opposing the reception of young children into the Church, and was most thoroughly and touchingly corrected by my own first-born. At the age of ten she told me of her conversion, and desired baptism.

"My darling child," I replied, 'you are young, and your gay relatives and companions may lead you into the world.'

"My father," she said, 'am I too young to love *you* and my *mother*? and ought I not to love Jesus before all and above all?'

"Since then I have rejoiced to welcome children to Him who says, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not,' thus rebuking in His apostles the very prejudice we now encounter. I may add that the death-bed of this precious daughter at the age of twenty-three, was a triumphant termination to a life of purity and love. Never have I known or read of such bodily suffering; nor of such exaltation in Jesus."

The Rev. Dr. Cox once informed me, that while he was a pastor in Brooklyn, there was a rule in his Church prohibiting children under fourteen years of age from becoming members of it. A bright little Christian girl asked for admittance. The session with various excuses put her off

from time to time. At last her pastor told her plainly that she was too young to be received into the Church. As she was well acquainted with Dr. Cox, she laid her head upon his shoulder, and wept. After a little she tenderly lifted her eyes to his, and said, "Dr. Cox. Jesus would not treat me so. He says, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me.'"

The pastor at once exclaimed, "*Away with all these rules which conflict with Christ's Word!*"

Dr. Henry Clay Fish, in his "Handbook of Revivals," says:

"We talk to our children in the family and Sunday-school about Jesus loving little children, and being ready to receive them. We urge them to begin now to love Him, repeating, 'I love them that love Me, and those that seek Me early shall find Me.' We tell them they may die early, and that that is a reason why they should repent now. And we pray for their immediate conversion, and teach them to sing of the loveliness of infant piety. But when they tell us they love Jesus, and would like to profess their love for Him, we hesitate, and advise caution and delay.

"Even where parents are compelled to acknowledge a great change in the child, and see better evidence of piety (as they admit) in the child than in themselves, they oppose the idea of his joining the Church.

Alas for such inconsistency! Do we not thus show that our prayers for the speedy conversion of children were faithless? Do we not depreciate and undo our own teachings? And do we not cast discredit upon the work of the Holy Spirit, and discourage all efforts on the part of a child to follow the divine requirements.

"It is astonishing that the teaching and the practice of Christians here are so at variance. Why not cease this perpetual talk about child-piety, or else accept its consequences? If we *believe* what we preach, namely, that the

children *ought* to love Christ, and should now, at once, give their hearts to Him (the staple of Sunday-school addresses), then why not acknowledge child-piety where it is apparent? Why try to lead the children to Christ, and then shut the door of Christ's Church against them? Why in our homes and sanctuaries entreat them with tears and loving words to be Christians *now*, and then doubtfully shake the head when the question comes of their admission to the communion?

"Many a parent perusing these lines can remember how a dear child spoke of having found Jesus. You heard the simple tale with tearful interest, and said, 'I am glad of it, darling.' You gave thanks for it in the closet; and felt unspeakable joy at seeing the new sweetness of temper in the child, the increased dutifulness, and lovingness, and prayerfulness.

"Then the child said, 'May I join the Church?' You said, 'Wait a little, my dear.' The child submitted (though with disappointment) to your superior judgment.

"Months passed. Again the child said, 'What do you think about my joining the Church now? I should *like* to do it, if you approve of it.' You said, 'You know you are very young; hadn't you better wait a little longer?' So it passed on.

"At length, years after (if God did not take the precious one to Himself), the minister, upon exhorting this youth to become pious, finds traces of existing godliness. 'How long have you felt so?' 'Why, for years.' The pastor calls to see you as to the child's profession. You consent, and the child is taken into the Church. But, oh! what a loss has already been experienced! Darkness and doubt gathered upon the young mind, from the fact that you seemed to question the reality of the change. Perplexity arose on a thousand points. Coldness ensued, and wanderings in evil ways; until at last in another work of grace

that poor thing again through fearful struggles came into the light, to regret till a dying day that there had not been experienced during those years the warm sympathies of the Church instead of the chilling influences of the world.

"This is by no means an overdrawn or unusual case. There are thousands of Christians who might have sat for the picture. And, in this light, how much is the practice under remark to be deprecated."

In my early Christian life I witnessed a scene which opened a full fountain of sympathy for the young and the tender lambs of the flock. Little Martha, the granddaughter of the officiating clergyman, appeared before the proper officers of the Church to be examined for admission to its communion. She *was* examined thoroughly, and the result was satisfactory. But the officers said, "Martha, you are very young, and had better wait till you are older before you make a public profession of religion." She did wait patiently for three months, and then appeared again, telling them the same sweet story of Jesus and His love; and yet she was advised to wait. Again she appeared, hopeful now, but was again disappointed. And when a whole year had passed, and she was again advised to wait, her breaking heart sobbed out, "Oh! grandpapa, how old must I be before I may love Jesus, and sit with Him at His table?" The old prejudice gave way; she was received, and became an ornament and a blessing to the Church.

Whom Christ has received, however young, the Church may not reject; and those who are fitted for His Church above are surely fitted for its fellowship here.

"I AM YOUR OWN LITTLE MARY."

Dr. John Todd, as everybody knows, loved children, and most thoroughly believed that they should be early led

to Christ. He was once at work in an inquiry meeting, at twilight, in Pittsfield, when he came to a little girl, deeply anxious about her soul. He talked and prayed with her, and, as he believed, finally led her to Christ. Before leaving her, he asked, "Whose little girl are you?" To his astonishment and delight, she now for the first time, turning her face to him said, "Why, papa, don't you know me? I am your own little Mary." Would not parents oftener be blessed in leading their own children to Christ, if they would go to work as Dr. Todd did, for the salvation of the children of others? Dr. Todd believed that children, who gave evidence of a change of heart, should be treated as Christians, and therefore received into the Church. He tells a touching story of the manner in which one was gathered into the fold of the Great Shepherd:

"Some months since the Spirit of God touched her heart and taught her that she was a lost sinner. She came to talk with me alone about the salvation of her soul. It was a time when none of my dear flock seemed to want to be led to the Great Shepherd, and I was surprised to see her. A few minutes convinced me, as I talked with her, that she had been taught by the Holy Spirit. She wanted peace of mind, deliverance from sin, and a friend to stand by her for ever.

"'Emma, have you learned that you are a sinner?'

"'Yes, sir; I feel it more and more every day.'

"'Have you asked for mercy yourself?'

"'Yes, sir, every day.'

"'How long have you been in the habit of daily prayer?'

"'I have always said my prayers, but I do not think I have really prayed till about two months ago.'

"'Do you know what your easily besetting sin is? I mean, the sin that gives you the most trouble?'

"'I think I do, sir; and I try to pray against it, and to kill it! It is my *temper*, sir! But I think I have done something to overcome it.'

"'You tell me, Emma, that you want to make a profession of religion. Why do you?'

"'Because, sir, Christ has told us to; and because I want to be

among His people ; and because I may die early, and I want to do my duty, as fully as I can.'

"The Saviour was set before her as our righteousness, and her faith and love took hold of Him with a strong grasp.

"On the next occasion of celebrating the Lord's Supper, little Emma came out in the aisle of the church, and, before the great congregation, stood up to be received into the Church. Her father was dead, and her mother was away, so of all her family she alone came. She was small in size, pale as a lily, and when in her simple white dress she came to be baptized, I could not but say, ' Little one, God is able to make thee stand.' "

Mrs. Annie Wittenmyer, author of the well-known hymn, "I have entered the valley of blessing so sweet," who has done so much for the cause of Christ and temperance, writes me as follows: "I was converted before I was eight years old. I was not allowed to join the Church till I was thirteen, but I was just as well prepared to join at eight as at thirteen: *better*, for the delay damped my zeal."

Oh! how many have I heard give a similar testimony!

CHRIST AND THE LITTLE ONES.

"The Master has come over Jordan,"
Said Hannah, the mother, one day;
"He is healing the people who throng Him,
With a touch of His finger, they say;
And now I shall go with the children,
Little Rachel and Samuel and John;
I shall carry the baby, Esther,
For the Lord to look upon."

The father looked at her kindly,
But he shook his head and smiled;
"— who but a doating mother
Would think of a thing so wild?
If the children were tortured by demons,
Or dying of fever, 'twere well;
Or had they the taint of the leper,
Like many an Israel——."

CHRIST AND THE LITTLE ONES.

"Nay, do not hinder me, Nathan ;
I feel such a burden of care ;
If I carry it to the Master,
Perhaps I shall leave it there.
If He lay His hands on the children,
My heart will be lighter, I know ;
For a blessing for ever and ever
Will follow them as they go."

So, over the hills of Judah,
Along by the vine-rows green,
With Esther asleep on her bosom,
And Rachel her brothers between ;
'Mong the people who hung on His teaching,
Or waited His touch and His word,
Through the row of proud Pharisees listening,
She pressed to the feet of the Lord.

"Now, why shouldst thou hinder the Master,"
Said Peter, "with children like these ?
Seest not how, from morning till evening,
He teacheth, and healeth disease ?"
Then Christ said, "Forbid not the children,
Permit them to come unto Me !"
And He took in His arms little Esther,
And Rachel He set on His knee ;

And the heavy heart of the mother
Was lifted all earth-care above,
As He laid His hands on the brothers
And blest them with tenderest love ;
As He said of the babes in His bosom,
"Of such are the kingdom of Heaven,"
And strength for all duty and trial
That hour to her spirit was given.



CHAPTER VII.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHILDREN.

"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."

Isaiah xi. 6.

THERE are many avenues of approach to the human heart; but oftentimes it seems as if all of these were obstructed, except those through which only a child can thread its way. It has often been observed, that those who have resisted the power of logical sermons and pathetic appeals, have been drawn to Christ through the influence of some little child. "*God hath chosen the foolish things of the world [at least those so regarded by men of the world] to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; that no flesh should glory in His presence*" (1 Cor. i. 27, 29).

It has occurred to me, that this book may be used by some as a HANDBOOK for reference and assistance in work among children. I have therefore gathered the following facts which have come under my observation, and others which I have culled from reliable sources. I have seen large audiences deeply moved by the recital of some of these touching incidents.

If we would be encouraged to labour **ENTHUSIASTICALLY** for the conversion of children, we should feel that there are powerful motives to urge us on in that direction.

The quickest way to reach adults is often through the children; therefore it has been found desirable, in commencing a series of meetings for the salvation of souls, to *begin* with the children. I am satisfied that many efforts in this direction fail, because this plan is not adopted.

ROWLAND W. DILLER'S NARRATIVE.

This gentleman and his wife, a Quakeress, were in a very remarkable manner led to the cross, through the influence of their little ones in Springfield, Illinois, in 1866.

It has been my pleasure to observe that each member of his family has since lived consistently. The little boy to whom he refers, now a young man, related in a meeting in Washington, two years ago, the story of the conversion of the family.

The words of Mr. Diller, as they appear below, were taken down by a short-hand reporter in St. Louis, at one of the Union Evangelistic Meetings held there in 1874.

Mr. R. W. Diller said that he was grateful for the work now in progress in St. Louis.

"When Mr. Hammond came to Springfield, I did not believe in him. My children went to his meetings, however. One Sunday afternoon twenty men gathered in my store, and we all joined in slandering Mr. Hammond, and said he was a humbug, although none of us had heard him. My wife was a Quakeress, and did not believe in revivals; and she was mad to think that he should have come to our city. That was good enough cause for grumbling for us, and we had a good time traducing him.

"We concluded our children should not go to any such circus performance as I supposed he gave, from the stories I heard on the street. That night my little boy took his Testament and went to his room, looking very serious, and did not appear again until morning. The

next day my boy came to me and said : 'Pa, why cannot we go to the meeting ; all the children from the schools are going ?'

"Well, I thought the matter over, and concluded if other people's children could go there without injury, mine could too. So I told them they could go. My wife concluded she'd go, just to see what it was like.

"Well, she got over all her prejudices against revivals, and they came home singing. One day my wife said to me : 'Husband, don't thee believe the Bible?' 'Certainly I do, every word of it,' I replied. 'Well, don't thee think thee'll die?' she asked. I told her I expected I should. 'Won't thee come to these meetings, and try to be a Christian?' I thought I would some time. **'BUT WHEN WILL THAT SOME TIME COME?'** she asked.

"That got me. Wherever I went it kept ringing in my ears, **'WHEN WILL THAT TIME COME?'** I had been a drinking man, had repeatedly gone reeling home, and but for liquor ours might have been a happy family.

"The next day my wife wanted me to go and hear Mr. Hammond. Finally, I told her that if it would be any satisfaction to her I would go. So I went to hear him when he preached in the State House. When the service was over I went across the street to my brother-in-law's store, and told him I had been in to hear Hammond. He asked me how I liked it. I told him I thought it was just about as good as any other circus. He said something else then, and I was afraid he was going to talk religion to me, so I left.

"The next Sunday Mr. Birch preached in the Third Baptist Church, and by some providence of God I went to hear him. He frequently repeated the words, 'He eateth with publicans and sinners,' and no matter whether he pointed to this corner of the church or to that, I thought he was pointing me out to the congregation every time. I went away from the church mad, and said that he need not have pointed at me all the time ; that there were forty other sinners in the house as bad as myself. I declared that I'd never go to hear Birch again. I learned the next day, however, that he didn't know I was in his church at all. The next day Hammond was to preach in the park. I declared I would not go ; I would go and see a sick friend. I started, but almost before I knew it I found myself right before the platform at the open-air meeting at which five thousand persons were present, and for two hours I never took my eyes off the preacher. That night I went to church with my family. When the sermon was over, Mr. Hammond asked all the young converts, and all who wanted to be Christians, to stand up. My wife and boy stood on one side of me, and on the other my two little girls, while I, a poor, dissipated wretch, sat in the midst. God kept whispering,

'Stand up.' The devil said, 'Sit still; there's one of your old friends right over there, and there's another; they'll laugh at you if you get up.' That night I tossed and tumbled about and could not sleep. My wife got up three times and went away alone, I knew to pray for me. In the morning she asked me if I had rested well. I told her never better. I knew it was a lie, and so did she, for I had not slept a wink.

"That morning my boy brought his Testament to me and said: 'Father, why can't we have family prayers like they do at Uncle Reuben's?' 'Oh, my boy,' said I, 'I can't pray. You and your mother may, if you wish.' I felt wretched; I couldn't tell what was the matter with me. I thought I'd go to the polls and electioneer and work off my miserable feeling.

"Strange to say, I never thought of my usual way of forgetting my cares, drowning them in the bowl; but I didn't get any better. I went around like a wooden man, and everybody said, 'What's the matter with Diller? He isn't the same jovial fellow that he usually is!' I went home and said to my wife, 'I can't stand this any longer; I want you to pray for me.' Presently a neighbour came in, and they both prayed for me. But I felt no better, and I went to meeting that night determined to stand up for prayers, if it killed me.

"I did stand up, and soon after a friend came and talked to me, and told me just to believe. I told him I didn't know how; that I didn't know what to believe.

"Then he related to me several other cases like my own, and explained to me how they had trusted Jesus. I saw it all then, and believed; and just that moment the burden of sin fell off my shoulders and rolled away down into the sea of forgetfulness, just as the burden of Christian did, whom Bunyan tells about.

"The next morning my little boy brought his Testament to me again (Bibles didn't lay around our house then as they do now), and I read a few verses of the 14th chapter of John, and then we knelt in prayer, an unbroken family, FIVE NEW-BORN SOULS into the kingdom of God.

"I tell you, friends, that the working Christians of Springfield to-day are the converts of that revival of 1866."

When he was about to sit down, I requested him to relate his struggle to overcome his appetite for liquor, in the hope that it might be an encouragement to some poor despairing soul to hope for a victory over a ruling appetite.

Mr. Diller continued:

"One day I passed a saloon and smelt the liquor; I hurried past as rapidly as I could, for I felt the old appetite coming over me again. I went down to my store. I was attended with a terrible burning thirst; I walked the floor until the clerks began to wonder what was wrong with me. I went upstairs and prayed, but when I came down temptation met me again, for there was the soda fountain and the bottles of port wine and liquor.

"I couldn't stand that. I went back upstairs, fell on my face, and in the agony of despair, I cried, '*O Lord, is it Thy desire that I should become a drunkard again? Is it Thy desire that I should again disgrace my wife and children?*'"

"I immediately felt better. I rose up a free man; free from the demon strong drink that had so long held my despairing soul in its grasp. My appetite for liquor was gone, and has never returned to this day."

When Mr. Diller concluded there were few dry eyes in the audience. His story was told so simply and so naturally that no one could doubt the truth of his words.

"DON'T YOU LOVE HIM FOR THAT, FATHER?"

One Sabbath evening, the father of two little children had placed one of them on each knee, to ask them what they had heard in the infant-school in that day. He was not a professor of religion, although he had a pious wife. The little children began to tell him, in their own way, of the beautiful home in heaven that Jesus had left because of His love to men. Looking full in her father's face, the little girl said, "Jesus must have loved us very much to do that; don't you love Him for it, father?" They then went on describing the trials and sufferings of the Saviour, and she again asked the question, "Don't you love Him for that, father?" and when they spoke of His death on the cross, the little one asked the third time, "Now, don't you love Him, father?"

The father had to put the children down, and go out of the room to hide his emotion. He confessed to the speaker

afterwards, that he felt worse under the artless questioning of his little children, than he ever felt under the most powerful preaching in his life. He soon afterwards united with the Church of God.

CHILD-INFLUENCE IN PRAYER.

In the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting a gentleman gave an interesting account of the influence which a little girl exerted in leading her father to Christ.

He spoke as follows :

“About two years after she began attending the school, one Sunday afternoon her father came home earlier than usual. Having to go upstairs for something, on reaching Mary’s room he heard her voice in earnest prayer. ‘O God, have mercy on my dear father ! Show him his sins. Let him feel his need of Jesus Christ. May he seek Thy mercy, and find peace through believing in Jesus.’ He stood powerless, almost paralyzed. Quietly he turned and came downstairs, and was overcome with a sense of his great guiltiness before God. The hand of God had touched him ; the light of heaven had beamed upon his dark, polluted soul.

“He sank down in a chair, and said to his wife, ‘I feel very strange.’ His wife, looking at him anxiously, said, ‘You don’t look well ; what’s the matter ? Shall I send for a doctor ?’ ‘No, I’m not sick, but I feel an awful weight on my heart. Isn’t there a Bible in the house ?’ He sighed heavily when Mary spoke : ‘Father, I know where there is one ; shall I fetch it ?’ ‘Yes, child, do.’ Quickly she was in her room, and brought the book, and handed it to her father. He gave it to his wife, saying, ‘You read ; I’m too wicked.’ Opening the book in the middle, her eye fell on the fifty-first Psalm, which she read slowly and distinctly, ‘Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-

kindness,' never fell upon ears more ready to receive them than was this poor trembling sinner. When the psalm was finished, he said, 'Can't you pray for me?' Blushing at such an unexpected request, she said, 'No, I cannot: I have not prayed since I was a little girl.' The dear child, seeing her father's distress, said, 'Father, shall I pray?' 'Yes, child, if you can.' She kneeled down, her father and mother both fell on their knees, when she poured out a fervent prayer for mercy and salvation for these her parents. God was in that room. Jesus was there. The Holy Spirit was there. That father's heart was melted; so was his wife's. Both wept together for their sins. Mary's face beamed with joy that her prayers were now answered. Many times had she sought the Lord alone, and prayed for her father's conversion. That day salvation came to that house.

"While partaking of their evening meal, he said, 'I should like to go somewhere to church to-night.' The wife answered, 'I don't know hardly where to go, but I'll go with you.' Mary said, 'Won't you go and hear Mr. B——?' They consented. She led them to the sanctuary where was her Sunday-school. The Gospel of Jesus was proclaimed, and the words reached the heart of this man. He went home to pray. He sought and obtained mercy. His wife became a Christian; all three united with the Church. Mary is now a devoted Sunday-school teacher, endeavouring to lead other children to Christ. The infidel is a zealous Christian, and has written in defence of the faith he once sought to destroy."

THE GAMBLER AND HIS CHILD.

In one of our morning meetings in St. Louis, Mr. Allison, an old gentleman of seventy-three years of age, arose in the back part of the house, and related a remarkable experience:

He said that he had but recently been converted ; that he had been a gambler and a drunkard ; that he had travelled all over the East and North with fast horses ; that he had been a participant in almost every kind of vice and debauchery ; "and yet," said he to the men who were still walking in the paths he trod, "Christ saved me, and He will save you if you ask Him to." The most interesting part of his story, however, was that after a drunken spree he hid his bottle of brandy in his hay-mow, where it was found one day by his little boy, who brought it to him and told him where he had discovered it, saying that he supposed some vagabond had left it there. "That comparison," said he, "was a sore thrust, and from that date I sought an interest in Christ."

CHILDREN AT WORK FOR CHRIST.

Little children, who do not find it necessary to offer the prayer of backsliding Christians, "RESTORE UNTO ME THE JOY OF THY SALVATION" (Ps. li. 12), are often the best workers in inquiry meetings. To illustrate this, I quote the Rev. Dr. Foot's words spoken in St. Louis.

He said that one evening he conversed with two little girls in Dr. Linn's church, and stated that they found the Saviour that same night. "On the following evening I was sitting near the pulpit when they came up to me leading two of their friends, saying: 'You can talk to them better than we can.' They then went out into the audience and found others, and brought them to me, and during the evening they brought to me *no less than forty anxious inquirers*. They were very industrious and earnest, and I called them my little messengers."

In 1868, I heard Mr. Moody relate, in the Aldersgate Street Prayer Meeting, London, the following touching incident of

A CHILD'S FAITH.

Mr. Moody said he had in his Sabbath-school in Chicago a little girl of seven years old, who had given as striking an example of faith as he had ever heard of.

The child's father was in the army, and some years ago the news came to the mother that he was shot. She was left with two little children. A day or two afterwards, the landlord came to ask for his rent. The poor woman told him she had no money, and more than that, could not tell where to get any, as she had nothing but what she earned by her needle, and the cold weather was coming. The landlord left the house with an oath, declaring that she must go, as he could have no lodgers but those who paid the rent regularly. As soon as he was gone, the poor mother threw herself into a chair and began to weep. The youngest of the two children, about four years old, ran to her side and said,

"Don't God give us everything we ask for?"

"Yes, if we ask in faith, and it's for our good."

"Well, isn't it for our good to have a house to live in?"

"I suppose it is," said the mother, hesitatingly.

"Then, mayn't I go and ask Him?"

"Yes, you may, if you want to."

The little girl went into the adjoining room and knelt down, and the mother heard her pray as follows:—

"O God, you have come and taken away my father; and mother's got no money to pay the landlord the rent, and he will turn us out of doors, and we shall sit on the doorstep and catch cold and die. Won't you, please, lend us a little house to live in?" She paused, and said, "Please, God!" Then, coming out to her mother, she said, "Don't weep any more, mother; God will take care of us."

The prayer was answered. Christian friends, hearing of

the death of the husband, sent her means, and paid her rent from that time to this. Some time after the relief had been given, the mother related the foregoing facts with tears in her eyes.

While in Nashua, N. H., two years ago, a lady wrote me the following letter, giving an interesting account of how her little sister, only SIX YEARS OF AGE, was used by God's Spirit to lead her prayerless father to Christ :

CARRIE.

She wrote : "Twelve years ago, when you were holding meetings in Lewiston, Maine, my little sister, six years of age, used to attend them. I think it was on the third day of the meetings you closed your address as follows : 'If there are any little boys or girls present whose papa or mamma does not pray with them, if they will come to me I will give them a little book for their parents to read.' My little sister immediately started up the aisle after a book for her papa. You gave her one, telling her to ask her papa to read it to her, and while he was reading she must pray, and after that sing the beautiful hymn, 'Just as I am,' which was printed with the book.

"When father came home to dinner, Carrie ran to him with the little book, and coaxed him to go out in the garden and read it to her. During the reading her little lips kept repeating, 'Our Father, who art in heaven, Our Father, who art in heaven;' for she said, 'Jesus' told her, when you gave her the book, to do so. That evening father stayed at home with her as usual, while mother was at the meeting. The next evening mother invited him to go with her, but he refused. He was a prominent business man, and his high morality was well known. Soon after the commencement of the exercises, mother was surprised and delighted to see father entering

the pew and taking his seat beside her. After the meeting the Christians went downstairs by themselves to leave room for the others. You invited any and all who wished, to speak for Jesus. The first to speak was my father. Mother was called upstairs to hear him testify to the love of Jesus. All were surprised, for it was well known that he never spoke in public. Throughout the remainder of the meetings he worked zealously. He always loved to say, '*A little child shall lead them.*' "

A MOTHER LED TO CHRIST BY HER LITTLE BOY.

At one of the Children's Meetings in Washington, in Dr. Rankin's church, sat a young mother and her boy. Dr. Rankin, who had laboured most earnestly in all the meetings, and who has the strongest faith in the conversion of children, approached the two, and addressed himself first to the mother with no effect. He then turned to the little boy, and soon found that his heart had already been touched with a view of Jesus on the cross "lifted up for him," and very soon the little fellow was weeping for his sins. He prayed with him, and the boy prayed for himself, and finally looked to Jesus and believed on Him as the Saviour of little children. It has since been evident that he was truly converted by the Spirit of God. The unconverted mother sat looking upon all this with much displeasure. Finally, she expressed her belief that the boy was too young to understand such difficult problems. But, said Dr. R. to her, "You need not shake your head; this boy knows more than you do on this subject."

On the way home the little fellow seemed very much interested in his mother's salvation, and said, "Mamma, what did Dr. Rankin say to you!" She avoided giving an answer; and he added, "Did you not give yourself up to Jesus, who died for us? I did, and oh, it's so easy,

mamma. Won't you come to Him too? I know He'll receive you, and we shall all be so happy?" The mother's heart was deeply moved, but she did not promise she would become a Christian. That night, after he had retired, he called his mother to his bedside and said, "The devil has been here, and tempted me to curse God." He then arose, knelt down and prayed to God to forgive him and help him to resist the devil.

The boy would not rest until his mother promised to go back to the meeting with him the next evening. She went, and was glad enough to have Dr. Rankin talk with her as he had with her little boy, and now she and another of her children are rejoicing in Jesus. Her husband was also drawn to the meetings. Every evening this mother and both of her little boys might be seen at the church, talking and praying with anxious souls.

One evening a converted infidel stated, in relating his experience, that it was the sight of his little children amongst the young converts that first made an impression upon him, and led him to realize that after all the Gospel was so simple that children could understand it, and that if he would ever be converted he must humble himself and become like them. He is now an earnest worker in Washington.

A minister from Scotland came upon the platform, and stated that he was led to Christ when a little boy at some Children's Meetings the Lord permitted me to hold sixteen years ago in that country. He said he knew of several children who were converted in the same meetings who are now MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

May the Lord help every Christian reader, and especially every Sunday-school teacher, to labour most earnestly for the immediate salvation of the little ones who are now under their influence, and then perchance in years to come, their hearts will be cheered by meeting those in the Gospel

ministry whom they were permitted to lead to Him who has said: "Suffer little children to come unto Me."

PRAYING CHILDREN.

In a town in Western New York, two little sisters with their little brother were returning from an afternoon Children's Meeting, and one of them said,

"I wish we could get father to go to the meeting for *grown-up* people to-night."

"How can we do it?"

"I'll tell you," said the little boy; "we'll all pray for him."

"But where can we get a good place to pray for him?"

"Why, you go into the parlour, where father hardly ever goes, and I will go off out to the barn," said the little boy.

So into the parlour the two girls went, and knelt down and began to pray. While they were pleading most earnestly, the father, who was a farmer, came in from the field, and instead of going round the back-way, started to pass right through the parlour; but as he opened the door quietly they did not hear him. He listened a minute, and felt he could not go through that room. Away he went to the barn, and there, too, up on the hay-mow, he heard his boy's voice in pleading prayer. As the little fellow slid down from the mow, his father put his hands upon his head, and with tears said, "Oh, pray for me! I WILL GO TO THE MEETING." And so he did; and, what is better still, I think he came to Jesus.

PAPA, HOW OLD ARE YOU?

In Harrisburg two years ago many children and youths were led to Jesus. Among them was a little boy, son of a gentleman of high literary standing.

In his study he said to me, "I was sitting here by the fire yesterday afternoon, when my little boy came in from the Children's Meeting. He sat quietly looking at the fire for awhile, as if something important was upon his mind. He then began to twist and shrug his shoulders, as if he had something difficult to express. Then, looking up, he said :

" ' Papa, how old are you ? '—' Fifty-six, my son ? ' "

" ' How old was grandpa when he died ? '—' Sixty, I believe.' "

" ' Well, papa, are you a Christian ? '—' I don't think I am, my son.' "

" ' Hadn't you better become one now, my dear father ? You haven't much time to wait before you will be *as old as grandpa was when he died.*' "

" I gave myself up to Jesus, and He made me a happy Christian."

" The little fellow," he added, " came close up to me, and begged me to love Jesus. *I have heard sermons all my life, but never such a powerful one as from my little boy, sitting here by the fire yesterday afternoon.*"

Children's prayers are always short and to the point. They do not ask God, as grown people do sometimes, to give them what they can get themselves. At the close of a long prayer by a father who had prayed for a poor family, his son said, " Father, if I had as much wheat in the barn as you have, *I would answer that prayer myself.*"

DISTILLERY BROKEN UP BY A CHILD'S INFLUENCE.

Eleven years ago, in a city in Illinois, a little child came to my meeting just because the others came, but with no thought of being a Christian. But Christians had been praying earnestly that all the children present might be led

to see their lost condition, and that Jesus had loved them and given Himself for them.

When this child went home she had found the Saviour, and her father and mother were very much astonished at her words and manner. They thought she was too much "excited," and determined not to let her attend any more such meetings. But she cried bitterly, and begged to go to the next meeting, that she might hear more about the Saviour.

Finally, the father said to the mother,

"You had better go with her, and if the meetings are *very bad* we'll not let her attend another one."

But, while at the meeting, the mother found *her* heart turning in love towards the precious Saviour. When she found how much He loved her and had done for her, she could reject Him no longer, and so she yielded herself up entirely to Him, and God, for Jesus' sake, forgave her all her sins and filled her soul with peace and joy; and she, too, went home as much "excited" as her child had been. Her ungodly husband was astonished when she said to him,

"You had better go yourself to the next meeting, for there is nothing at all bad about them."

He was thus drawn to attend the house of God, where he had seldom been before. God met him with His Spirit, and showed him what a great sinner he had been. He felt at first that he was too great a sinner to be saved. For a long time he could not see how God could be just and yet forgive him; but when he heard how Christ had died, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God," he bowed at the foot of the cross, and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner, for Jesus' sake."

His prayer was answered, and he, too, went home "excited." Yes, he was so much "excited" that he at

once resolved to *give up* MAKING WHISKY. He had for a long time been *a distiller* of that which lead's so many down to a drunkard's grave. But God showed him his sins, and he resolved never to distil another drop of liquor, for he felt that by so doing he was adding to the long train of sixty thousand who fall into the drunkard's grave every year in the United States.

A BOY'S PRAYER MOVES HARD HEARTS.

A New York daily newspaper gives the following account of an occurrence of a very affecting character, which took place on an English steamer:

"A little ragged boy, aged nine years, was discovered on the fourth day of the outward voyage from Liverpool to New York, and carried before the first mate, whose duty it was to deal with such cases.

"When questioned as to the object of his being stowed away, and who brought him on board, the boy, who had a beautiful, sunny face, and eyes that looked like the very mirrors of truth, replied that his steptather did it, because he could not afford to keep him, nor to pay his passage out to Halifax, where he had an aunt who was well off, and to whose house he was going. The mate did not believe the story, in spite of the winning face and truthful accents of the boy. He had seen too much of stowaways to be easily deceived by them, he said; and it was his firm conviction that the boy had been brought on board and provided with food by the sailors. The little fellow was very roughly handled in consequence. Day by day he was questioned and requestioned, but always with the same result. He did not know a sailor on board, and his father alone had secreted him and given him the food which he ate.

"At last the mate, wearied by the boy's persistency in

the same story, and perhaps a little anxious to inculcate the sailors, seized him one day by the collar, and dragging him to the fore hatch, told him that unless he confessed the truth, in ten minutes from that time he would hang him on the yardarm. He then made him sit down under it on the deck. All around him were passengers and the sailors of the midday watch, and in front of him stood the inexorable mate, with his chronometer in his hand, and the other officers of the ship by his side. It was the finest sight, said our informant, that we ever beheld, to see the pale, proud, sorrowful face of that noble boy, his head erect, his beautiful eyes bright through the tears that had fled. The mate had told him he had but two minutes, and advised him to speak the truth and save his life ; but he replied, with the utmost simplicity and sincerity, by asking the mate if he might pray.

“The mate said nothing, but nodded his head. All eyes turned on him, this brave and noble fellow, this poor waif whom society owned not, and whose own stepfather could not care for ; there he knelt with clasped hands and eyes upraised, while he prayed the dear Lord Jesus to take him to heaven.

“Sobs broke from strong hard hearts, as the mate sprang orward to the boy and clasped him to his bosom, and kissed him and blessed him, and told him how sincerely he now believed his story, and how glad he was that he had been brave enough to face death and be willing to sacrifice his life for the truth of his own word.”

THE CHILD AND THE INFIDEL.

A speaker in the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting said that he went from a Brooklyn mission-school to a far-off home in Missouri. He went with several boys, who were placed in good Christian families. When one of them, named

Tommy, left the mission-school in Brooklyn, it was peculiarly hard to part with him, for he was a good boy. Tommy shed many bitter tears at the thought of going so far away. There God had met him in mercy, and had given him a new heart, and instilled into it an earnest desire for the salvation of others. Living in the same town was an old GREY-HEADED INFIDEL. He had been many years in the place, and had grown up with it. He was a man who never went to church, and paid no heed to religious things whatever.

When this little boy, who was only twelve years old, became a Christian, he felt very anxious for the salvation of this poor old infidel. So he went to him and asked him to go to meeting with him. "No, no," said the old man, "I have not been inside a church for twenty years, and I do not wish to go." "Oh, come with me," said the young disciple, "come with me. It will do you no harm, and it may do you some good." "No, no," the infidel replied, "you do not catch me going there. I know better. I am not going to begin now, after staying away from church for twenty years. No, no, you don't catch old birds with chaff."

The boy began to shed tears. He could not help it. The old man, seeing this, said that he thought he would go just to please his little friend, for he did not know when any one had manifested such anxiety for him. The next night Tommy went for the old man again, and with some persuasion he got him to go a second time. That night the old man got an arrow in his heart. The third night there was no trouble in getting the infidel to go to the meeting. The fourth night he went of his own accord. That old infidel was awakened, convicted, and converted; and he often now, in the prayer meetings, speaks of his experience, and says, "What would have become of me if it had not been for Tommy's tears and entreaties?" Thus the poor

mission-school boy has begun to be a real missionary, and has been enabled, by God's grace assisting, to win over the stout-hearted infidel to the cause of Christ.

INFIDEL AND CHILD IN ST. LOUIS.

My attention was often called, in the inquiry meetings which followed the morning prayer meetings in St. Louis, to an infidel lawyer, who seemed to delight to engage and perplex the Christians who were seeking to lead others to Christ. I was asked to contrive some way, if possible, to reach him. It seemed worse than useless to argue with him.

One day, I found in different parts of the building, six converts who had been NOTED INFIDELS. I asked each of them to gather around this young lawyer, and told them I should be there, and ask them to relate their experience.

After awhile I approached one of them, and inquired, in the presence of the scoffer, "Are you a Christian?" This question brought out successively the experience of the converted infidels, but, to my astonishment it seemed to have no effect on the infidel lawyer.

A few weeks after, when the Children's Meetings were held in Rev. Dr. Foot's church, the lawyer's daughter, about six years old, was present, and after a day or two was led, as she believed, to trust in Jesus. Returning home from the meeting, she asked :

"Papa, why don't you love Jesus? He was so kind to die for us, how can you help loving Him? He bled and died on the cross for you and me. If you will only come to Him, He will make you happy too."

Thus with great tenderness she pleaded with him to come to Christ. When she was about to retire, she begged her father, who was in the room, to let her kneel down and pray with him. This was too much for his proud heart. His

little daughter's words were more potent than all the arguments or sermons he had ever heard.

Not long after, he related, in Dr. Burlingham's church, the story of his conversion. Many hearts were melted. He, with about seventy others, went with me to Jefferson City, the capital of the state, and held a meeting in the senate chamber. There he related his experience in a most powerful and touching manner, telling how HIS LITTLE DAUGHTER had been used by God in leading him, a sceptical infidel, to Christ.

NOBLE PRENTISS AND THE LITTLE CRIPPLE.

In Lawrence, Kansas, Mr. Noble Prentiss attended the union meetings for the purpose of reporting them for a paper of which he was one of the editors. He listened attentively to the sermons, and wrote excellent reports of the meetings, but was entirely unmoved himself.

One day as he was passing out of the church during the inquiry meeting, a beautiful little crippled child, with large black eyes, lifted up her finger, as she stood exactly in front of him, and said, "*Mr. Prentiss, won't you come to Jesus and be a Christian?*" He tried to evade her question and pass on. But still she hedged up his way, and with tearful eyes pressed him with questions, still more pointed. At last he was almost forced to promise her that *he would be a Christian*. That promise was faithfully kept. Mr. Prentiss not only became a Christian, but a most active one. He was a man of fine ability, well known in all the region, able at once to command the attention of any audience, but he had been sadly addicted to strong drink. After this great change, he went from town to town and city to city, addressing large numbers. I have no doubt that many by his earnest words were led to Christ.

God grant that the facts related in this chapter may be

the means of leading its readers to realize THE GREAT INFLUENCE which *converted children* may exercise in winning souls to Christ. And may this truth, brought home by the Spirit of God, act as a powerful stimulus to induce our readers to labour more earnestly in the Sabbath-school, by the fireside, and EVERYWHERE, FOR THE IMMEDIATE SALVATION OF THE CHILDREN.





CHAPTER VIII.

TESTIMONIES ABOUT THE WORK, AND FROM CHILDREN THEMSELVES.

"OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES AND SUCKLINGS THOU HAST ORDAINED STRENGTH" (or, as Prof. Tholuck translates it, **"PREPARED THYSELF AN ARMY"**). *Psalm viii. 2.*

WHEN a lawyer has a cause to plead in court, he is anxious to secure competent witnesses. He well knows that if the truth is on his side, and that if his witnesses are unimpeachable and clear in their testimony, he has every reason to expect the jury will decide in his favour.

I once heard an eminent lawyer say he gained his case solely through the testimony of a little boy not ten years old.

We have asserted in these chapters our belief in the conversion of children. We shall therefore call before us, among other witnesses, children who testify that they have experienced the grace of God in their hearts.

This chapter will no doubt be passed over by some of our readers, while others, who have had opportunities of more intimate acquaintance with the young, will read its various testimonies with the deepest interest.

The **LETTERS FROM CHILDREN**, which it contains, have

been selected from numerous packages of such letters, carefully filed away, some of them in years gone by. We have endeavoured to choose only those from children under twelve or thirteen years of age.

It has been stated, that George Whitefield, after one of his field days in London, when he had been preaching to fifteen thousand people, received one thousand letters from those whose hearts had been that day touched.

An appointment had been given out that he would preach the next evening in his tabernacle; but instead of delivering a *sermon*, he drew from his pocket letters which he had received from anxious inquirers and young converts, making remarks upon them which deeply interested the audience.

No doubt some expressed disappointment in not having heard a sermon from the famous preacher, but Mr. Whitefield well knew the power of these simple experiences and heartfelt utterances. I mention this to show how natural it is for new-born souls to say with David, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul" (Ps. lxi. 16). Many who are not moved in the least by a logical sermon, are often powerfully wrought upon by the narration of an experience. Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, once said to his friend, Dr. Lyman Beecher, "WE NEED MORE EXPERIMENTAL PREACHING."

In a former chapter we referred to the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, of London. We now quote from a sermon which he preached during the union services in that city:

"The Lord Jesus has declared His purpose was, and is, to draw all men to Him, and therefore He has been doing that during two thousand years. No one can say how many He has drawn to Himself who are now living in glory. That is His work still, and, unless we are greatly mistaken, He has brought a number of children to believe and be blessed in

Him during the past week. 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.' Of course, that does not exclude children; children are a part of the 'all.' It is not surprising that He should call children to Himself as soon as they are able to sin, and that is very young. They can understand what it is to have a Saviour from sin as soon as they know what sin is, and that another can bear their punishment."

The following lines were written by a lady who was deeply interested in the Children's Meetings in Rev. Baptist Noel's church:

"Oh, bring me many, many
Sweet flowers for Jesus' brow,
Blossoms and buds and gar-
lands,
Breathing glad beauty now.

"Oh, bring them all for Jesus,
Ye children, come to Him.
Loving the blessed Saviour,
Who suffered for your sin.

"Oh, flock to Him in numbers
Who bids the children come,
Watching so kindly o'er you,
He'll safely guide you home.

"Oh, come then now to Jesus,
Whose heart with love o'er-
flows,
And early twine your beauty
Around sweet Sharon's
Rose.

"For He is—oh so loving—
Among ten thousand chief,
Kinder than any brother
In every care and grief.

"Oh, now your voices loudly
In hallelujahs raise;
Hundreds of little children
Unite to sing His praise.

"See! they are coming, flocking
To Jesus' loving arms,
Who little children blesses,
And shields from all alarms.

"And hark! the happy chorus
Their childish hearts out-
pour:
'We've come just now to
Jesus,
Who all our sorrows bore.'

"And oh, we love the Saviour,
Who died on Calv'ry's tree,
And we will always follow
Just where He bids us be.

"And now! just now! we'll
praise Him:
'Hosanna to the Lord!
Hosanna! He has saved us!
They shout with one accord.

• We bow our heads in wonder,
Speechless, adoring praise;
And—silent—our hosannas
With little children's raise.

' For God is now among us,
His Spirit is outpoured,
Drawing in tender mercy
To Christ the risen Lord.

' And at the river gathered,
And at the crystal sea,
We'll meet these little chil-
dren
That Jesus has set free.

"We shall gather where the
river
Flows by the throne of God,
And we shall be so happy
For ever with the Lord.

"For ever! oh, for ever!
What mind can grasp the
thought?
Eternity and Jesus
For those His blood hath
bought.

"O Saviour! blessed Saviour!
Now let us work for Thee;
That many more may meet us
Beyond the crystal sea."

The Editor of *The Christian*, speaking of one of the Children's Meetings at the late Mr. Noel's church, said:

"One evening a boy of twelve was brought to Mr. H. by his elder sister, who said he wanted to speak to him. We shall never forget the rapt expression of that dear child's face. There was no tear, for there is a joy as well as a woe too deep for tears, but his voice and his whole frame quivered with suppressed emotion as he said, 'I have come to thank you for the words you have spoken; they have brought me to Jesus.' We cannot recall the brief conversation which ensued, but if we could, we should still be unable to convey the sense of God's presence which was manifest in the steadfast tearless gaze of that believing boy, who appeared, like Stephen, to behold the heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.

"Many boys and girls were weeping bitterly that they were such sinners, their conviction not arising so much from their outward acts as from not having loved so kind a Saviour; and thoughtful Christians will readily perceive that conviction of sin on this account is deeper in its

character, and has more the elements of permanence, than conviction produced by the sense of active transgression.

“He received, while in the meeting, about thirty letters, some of which he read. The following are a few of them :

“‘I have felt very happy since I attended your meetings. I came, on Monday night, and I felt very sorry for my sins. And on Tuesday night we had a little prayer meeting at Calthorpe Street Schools, where there was about thirty of my school-fellows. How kind was Jesus to forgive so great a sinner as I was for eleven years. I am eleven years old. I hope to love Jesus as long as I live.

“‘I am, your young friend, _____.’”

Many of the following Letters are instructive as to the methods the Spirit uses, not only to point the anxious to Christ, but also to awaken the careless.

“I am very happy to say that I attended your meeting on Tuesday night, and *was not much impressed till a gentleman came and spoke to me of the love of the Saviour, which made my heart melt.* He then prayed with me, and I got up with renewed strength, and went home rejoicing in Jesus. I came again on Wednesday, which strengthened me in grace. I am now, I believe, a lover of Jesus, and one of the redeemed. What makes me think so is, whereas before I was so weighed down with my sins, now I am happy and light-hearted. I think that these meetings have done great good. I now conclude, wishing you every happiness in Jesus. Also, I am greatly indebted to Mr. Noel, and hope that he may still continue happy in Jesus. I am thirteen years of age.

“Yours sincerely, _____.”

This letter shows how God blesses *personal effort*.

“DEAR SIR,—I am happy to say that I think I have found Jesus. It was last Monday night, *when a lady came and spoke to me,* and I then saw that it was no use depending on ourselves. We must look to Jesus, and to *Him only.* I then went home and prayed, and since then I am a great deal happier. The hymns that we sing are very nice, my favourite being ‘Just now.’ I wish we could have prayer meetings among ourselves to strengthen our faith, and to give us courage to go and show many others the way to happiness while on this earth, and

eternal life in the world to come. Christian friends going round the chapel do a great deal of good, I am sure ; as if somebody had not I should not now be so happy. I hope you will bring many others to lay hold of the first link of the golden chain. Give my very best thanks to Mr. Noel, for the kind way in which he speaks to us, and I hope your meetings will continue for some time.

“Your affectionate friend, ———.”

Many of the letters express the deep gratitude and affection of the writers. Faithful pastors are never more beloved than during a time of religious awakening. Evangelists who labour wisely with pastors will do all in their power to strengthen the bond of union between the shepherd and his flock.

“DEAR SIR,—I have been to your meetings three times. I am very sorry they are not going to continue, as I like to come very much. I hope, from this time, I shall ever love Jesus, and be a true Christian, and never forget the five links of the golden chain, especially the first one (Jesus). My dear mother came to hear you preach on Sunday evening, and liked you so much that she determined to bring me, but she was not able to before Wednesday night, and then I told her I would not come, and when she said I should, I laughed at her, and she told me she would tell you what a bad girl I was, and so she did, and you and the gentleman who spoke first last night, came and spoke to me, and prayed that Jesus would make me a good girl, and I trust that He has pardoned all my sins. You said last night that you wanted to see five hundred more children, and then you would see whether you could not continue the meetings another week, and I have brought seven to-night. Please do try and continue these meetings, and kindly thank Mr. Noel for having the meetings in his chapel. Please do speak to the little girls I bring, and I will ever pray for all the kind teachers that speak with us. ———, aged ten years.”

CHILD'S FAITH IN PRAYER.

How true it is that “Prayer is the Christian's vital breath.” Yes, the new-born soul at once learns the language of prayer. The Spirit of God is a wonderful teacher. He can speak in a way that the youngest cannot fail to understand.

I could but write these words after reading the letter below, from another, who attended the same meetings in London:

"BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED ME."

"DEAR SIR,—I write to tell you that I trust I have peace in Jesus, because He died in order to save me. I was at the meeting on Sunday evening, and felt how very wicked I was not to love Him, when you read how He suffered for us, and you showed us that crown of thorns. I feel now that I love Him because He first loved me, and died on the cross to save me. Four of my schoolmates have been, I trust, converted, and we are going to ask our governess on Monday if she will let us have a prayer meeting in a little room which we are not always allowed to go into. I do not think she will refuse. This morning I prayed that God would put it into the heart of some little friend who had found Jesus, to want to have a prayer meeting, and this afternoon, as I was helping one to put some books into the cupboard, she said to me, 'Don't you think it would be very nice to have a prayer meeting in the luncheon hour?' Then I said I should be very glad, and we have agreed to ask our governess on Monday. She has a little sister who went home last night after she had been to the meeting, saying, 'I can't help crying, for I'm not quite sure if I love Jesus or not.' Another little schoolmate went home and shut herself in her room, and knelt down and prayed. She is either seven or eight years old. Pray that she may find Jesus. Pray that my parents and school-fellows may be brought to Jesus; and pray for me.

"Your little friend, _____, aged thirteen years."

LETTER FROM A BLIND CHILD.

I have received numerous letters from them. I quote but one:

"INSTITUTE FOR BLIND, *April 30, 1869.*

" * * * * * For several years I have at times been made to feel that I wanted to be a Christian, though only from a feeling of fear of punishment; not because I loved Jesus, and wanted to please Him, as I do now. I attended your meeting for children on Sunday afternoon. I was interested in the stories, and was glad to be there, though that day I had no serious impressions. I went again on Sunday evening. While Mr. McGowan was speaking, I felt that my heart was somewhat moved, but after leaving the house I threw it off to a great

extent. On Monday or Tuesday evening I went to church, and you preached about the death and sufferings of Christ. I felt then myself to be such a great sinner that it seemed to me I could see the Saviour so plainly bleeding on the cross for my sins. I cannot express how I felt on that evening. Some Christian gentleman spoke to me about my soul and prayed for me. I then felt willing to give myself entirely up to Jesus, who died for me. I felt a relief from my burden of sin. I came home, went to my room, and prayed with such a joy as I had never felt before. I loved to pray so, it seemed that Jesus was right there with me. I feel that Jesus has pardoned my sins. I feel so happy now. I feel that I love the Saviour more all the time, and I want everybody to love Him. I love all Christians, everybody who loves Jesus; and I pray for those who do not love Him, for I want them to come to Jesus. I felt so happy here this morning at our meeting at the Institute. It seemed that God was right in our midst.—Pray for us.

DEAF AND DUMB CHILDREN.

One Sabbath, in the Academy of Music, Indiana, among the three thousand who were present, I saw a man standing up and making all sorts of strange motions. I thought at first that he was insane. But after a little I saw that in front of him were a large number of boys and girls who could not hear a word that was said. They were all deaf and dumb, and so their teacher was translating for them. I did not think at the time that he could make them understand much that was said. But in a day or two I visited their institution, and I found that they knew *all* that had been said. One of the teachers said to me, "I do not believe there are any that heard you, who can tell more of what you said than these deaf and dumb children."

"IF I AM NOT A SAINT, I AM A SINNER."

At one of a series of Children's Meetings in Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle, where thousands gathered day after day, a little child who had been converted some months

before in Mr. Noel's chapel, handed me the following letter :

"With much pleasure I write to tell you how I found Jesus. 'The first time I came to your meetings at Mr. Noel's, I liked the stories very well, but when I found Christians going about and asking, 'DO YOU LOVE JESUS?' I went away as quickly as I could ; but somehow or other I did not feel happy. But I came the next night, and a little friend with me. We were both impressed during the meeting, but Satan would tell me to look at something somebody had on, and I am afraid I yielded, for I was too proud to be seen crying ; but as we were passing out, you were standing in the aisle, and asked us if we loved Jesus. My heart was too full to answer, but you led us to a side seat and put a little prayer into our mouths, and talked so kindly and gently it overcame my wicked heart : it was just what I wanted. I gave myself to Jesus ; He washed all my sins away, and I could sing, 'Yes, I love Jesus.' *I do not think I should have come to Him if I had not been spoken to personally.* I should have gone out, and the impressions would have been effaced by other things, and, perhaps, I never should have thought anything more about them. I must say, that when I saw you coming, it *wounded my pride*, and for a minute I wished you had not been there ; but the next night I came, I could not help loving you, and not only you, but Jesus. When you went away, Satan told me it was all fancy and excitement ; I used to reply, 'If I am not a saint, I am a sinner,' and then go and give myself to Jesus again to make sure. I cannot think how it is so many Christians do not believe in children's conversions. Children are not born without understanding of these things ; and I am sure of this, that when a child knows who Jesus is, its own conscience tells it it is a sinner, and is old enough to be converted, however young it may be. I am sure you will be glad to know that I am a member of the Church."

"AS I WAS COMING OUT, A LADY ASKED ME IF I LOVED JESUS."

The following letter shows the power of a word at the right time. Had that lady allowed this boy to pass at that time, without speaking to him, he might have crowded out with the thousands who thronged Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle that day, and soon lost all his serious impressions.

Does not the Spirit of God often in vain sound the words in the ears of Christians, "Run and speak to that

young man," or that child? It is my prayer that these simple letters may be used to stimulate direct personal effort for the salvation of souls.

"DEAR SIR,—When I came to your meeting on Sunday last, I did not love Jesus. I was a sinner; I did everything that was bad. But *as I was coming out a lady asked me if I loved Jesus.* I replied, 'No.' She said, 'Would you like to love Jesus? He is very good and kind. He died on the cross to save sinners.' When I began to feel I was a sinner and wept, the lady said, 'Let us pray,' and we did so. I asked God to give me a new heart. So when it was time to go, I went home, and my sister said, 'Let us have a prayer meeting.' When my brother prayed that I might be saved, I prayed myself, and God answered my prayer. I thank you for coming to the Tabernacle. God bless you. I feel so happy I cannot express my feelings. *I love the Saviour, and I want others to do the same.*

"My age is twelve, and I write this, so that you may tell others as young as myself that they are not too young to be converted.

"Yours very truly

FILLED TUMBLERS.

We may illustrate the importance of the lesson taught by the above letter, as follows: you may take a glass perfectly dry, and carefully fill it with water, and even after it is full you can gently pour in more till it is rounded up into a convex shape above the rim, yet none trickles over the edge. Now if you gently touch the edge of the glass, the water will at once begin to run over.

Just so, I have often seen a company of children listening to the Gospel, when no deep impression seemed to be made, and yet, as the ministers and Christians have immediately moved about among these same children, I have seen the *tears* begin to fall, showing that their little hearts were full, though previously there was no special indication of it.

I believe that often superintendents and those who

address children and labour for their salvation, would be astonished at the amount of anxiety in their hearts if they would adopt this plan of personally dealing with the little ones, and praying with them ONE BY ONE.

THE WORDS OF MR. JOHN SANDS,

spoken at the meeting of the London Sunday-school Union, show how the children who wrote the above letters, and their friends, were looked after by the pastor of John Street Chapel.

“The great truth of Jesus’ mission, His sufferings and death, were explained, with interesting anecdotes, all of which, however, bore upon the one subject of Jesus’ love to sinners. The result before the close of that evening was what he (Mr. Sands) had never before witnessed. There could not have been less than three or four hundred children who bowed their heads and wept, feeling deeply their sin in never having loved so precious a Saviour. The following evening the meeting was continued. The children did not need to be invited to come; they felt constrained to come, and a similar blessing followed. Each evening of the week, except Saturday, they met, and it was difficult to get the younger ones away. Not only children but youths and grown people all seemed alike interested and moved. The following week the services were more for adults, but still there was great blessing, and although the children were requested not to come, many of them came.

“After the fortnight had expired, Mr. Noel invited those who believed that they had found Jesus and were trusting in Him, and those only, to come on the Monday evening to the chapel, and he would have tea provided for them at six o’clock; but those only were to come who in their hearts and minds believed that they had found Jesus.

“On the Monday evening three hundred and thirty children came, and before any of them were admitted they

were subjected by the senior teachers and others to a scrutiny, and a number of those who had come merely expecting to get tea were sent home. He had conversed with teachers who were sound, excellent Christians, and who said the change in the school was something wonderful. One female teacher had told him she believed all the children in her class were converted except two, and even these two were awakened. He could ascribe it to nothing but to the blessing of God's Spirit upon the loving way in which the mission of our blessed Saviour was told to these children. Christ had been precious to his heart for many years, but he had never had his own heart so drawn out in affectionate, tender love for the blessed Jesus, and never did he so feel how little he had loved Him, and how much He deserved to be loved before."

"HE LOCKED ME UP IN A ROOM."

Even in a Christian country converted children are sometimes called upon to endure persecutions. This is all the more hard when it comes from a father and mother.

To make sure that the little child really wrote the following letter, I sent down where she lived to find out all about it, and I have reason to think that all she says is quite true.

"NEWARK, N. J., *March 18th, 1865.*

"I have felt very happy since you spoke to me. I went there on Wednesday, and I felt very bad that night, for I thought that I was a sinner. So after meeting you spoke to me. I went home crying. My mother asked me what was the matter. I told her that I was crying, for I felt that I was a sinner, and I didn't like Jesus. She called me a fool, and told me that I had no business to go to meeting; and she began to swear at me, and said if I went again, she would beat me almost to death. The next morning I prayed and read two chapters in the Bible, and picked out all the nice verses and learned them; and was talking to my mother about Jesus, and all about what you told

me, and she told me that she did not want to hear any more of my preaching, and told me to go along about my business. She didn't want to hear my voice any more. Father came home, and he was mad, and I told him about my feeling as though I was converted, and told him all that you told me; and he began to swear at me, and he locked me up in a room, and said he would let me out if I would promise not to go to meeting, for he did not like me to go to meetings. He said it was a bad place to go. He kept me locked up in a room a week, and fed me on bread and water. But one day father went out and mother was sick, and she wanted me to wait on her. So she let me out, and about half-past three o'clock I asked my mother whether I could go to meeting, and she said yes. She said that she was glad to get rid of me. So I went, and when I came home, father was home, and he gave me a whipping, and so did mother; and father gave mother a scolding because she let me out of the room, and let me go to meeting. I hope you will pray for mother and father, that they may become converted, and pray for me too, so that I may have strength to cling to Jesus."

"I KNEW I HAD FOUND JESUS."

"I am a little girl eleven years old, and I hope I have found a Saviour in Jesus. Two weeks ago last Wednesday night, I attended a children's prayer meeting, held in Stewart Street Church, and conducted by a boy who has recently found the Saviour. Here I first felt how great a sinner I was. I tried to lead a Christian life, but I found it very hard, and I kept doing wrong things. But yesterday I attended one of your Children's Meetings, and we sung the beautiful hymn, 'Jesus paid it all.' In the fourth verse it says—

'Till to Jesus Christ you cling, by a simple faith,

"Doing" is a deadly thing; doing ends in death."

"I then knew that I had been 'doing'; trying to save myself instead of leaving my burden at Jesus' feet. When I went up on the platform with the other little children as having a new heart, I was afraid I was acting a lie. But when I got home and was ready for bed I knelt down and prayed to God to give me a new heart. For a time it seemed as if God would not answer my prayer, but suddenly I felt so happy I had to burst right out singing, and I knew I had found Jesus. To-day I have written out the definitions of a new heart, and whenever I think I have sinned in one of them I mean to put a black mark against it, and pray that that heart may be restored to me. I put 'Obedient heart' and 'Working heart' first, as I thought those

would be the ones I would find it hardest to keep without a mark. I mean to read my Bible every day, and select some text to learn. Last night my text was, 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation : the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' I want you to pray for me, that I may never turn back from the right road. May God bless the meetings wherever they are held.—From your little convert,

"E. M."

"I THOUGHT TO MYSELF THAT I WOULD NOT CRY."

"I want to tell you how I found Jesus. I went to hear you speak to the children on Friday night, May 31st. I had heard about the children crying for their sins, and *I thought to myself that I would not cry*, nor let it have any effect on me. I know now that it was the devil who made me think so, but Jesus is stronger than the devil ; and all the time you were speaking He softened my heart, yet Satan kept whispering to me not to be sorry for my sins, not to ask Jesus for a new heart. But at the close of the service a dear friend asked me if I loved Jesus. I cried then, for I could not say no, and I dared not say yes ; then a gentleman came and talked with me ; then I felt what a sinner I was, how wicked I had been ; then I prayed that Jesus would forgive me, and give me a new heart ; and so He did ; and I went home from chapel that night happy in the Lord. I have had many little trials to bear at home, but I try, with Jesus' help, to bear them patiently. Satan often tries to make me unhappy, and doubting whether I have really found Jesus ; but when I pray to God, Satan goes away, for he hates to see me on my knees ; but he comes again and tempts me as before, but the dear Saviour keeps me from yielding, and then I feel so happy. Day by day I love Jesus more, but I want to serve Him. Oh, how I long to do something for Jesus, who has done so much for me ! I mean to try and get as many of my companions as I can to come and hear you ; then I sincerely hope that they will go home rejoicing because they have found a precious Saviour.

"I can now sing with all my heart, 'Jesus is mine,' and 'I love Jesus.' Do pray for me, that I may keep in the way 'that leadeth unto everlasting life,' and, please, pray for my papa and three brothers, who have not yet sought Jesus. I like that hymn best, 'Nothing either great or small.'—With much love to yourself and Mrs. Hammond, and many thanks to Mr. Noel for his kindness, I remain yours ever,

"——, thirteen years old."

Little Gracie, eight years of age, whose home is in Cincinnati, says :

"CINCINNATI, Dec. 30.

"Jesus says, 'I love them that love Me, and they that seek Me early shall find Me.'

"I am trying to seek the Saviour while He may be found. I am very much interested in the meetings, and I hope they are doing me some good. I have a little friend that goes to the meetings with me, and I like to talk to her about Jesus. I love the songs they sing there. I love one more than the others, and that one is 'My Jesus, I love Thee.' I love to read the Bible, and I do read it every evening. I feel that I am a wicked sinner, and ought to pray for myself, but it seems as if I can never get in the right way. I cannot keep my eye on Jesus all the time. I feel that I must pray and love Jesus if I want to go to heaven when I die. I feel like singing all the time. I love those sweet songs so much that tell about Jesus and His love. I hope you will pray for me that I may find the Saviour, and that He will help me to pray earnestly for myself.

"From your little friend,

"GRACIE B——, aged eight years."

It is much more interesting to read children's letters from their own pens than on the printed page.

No doubt some who peruse these pages will wonder if the authors of these little letters did not receive some assistance from their parents while writing them. But a sight of the originals would generally convince a sceptic of their genuineness.

THE COVENANT.

About fourteen years ago I became acquainted with Miss M. E. Winslow, of Brooklyn, at that time a teacher in the Parker Institute.

Her own soul was greatly blessed in the meetings for children which she then attended, and from that time she became an earnest worker. Especially was it her delight to lead children to Jesus.

Some time after, she wrote me the following concerning a covenant she presented for the children to sign who professed to have been converted.

I have not much faith in a man signing a pledge in his own strength. But when a person, young or old, after being examined by judicious ministers or laymen, is found to be able to give a reason of the hope that is in him with meekness and fear, it seems to me most proper that he should "subscribe with his hand unto the Lord," and thus enter into covenant with Him who has said,

"I WILL MAKE AN EVERLASTING COVENANT WITH THEM, THAT I WILL NOT TURN AWAY FROM THEM, TO DO THEM GOOD; BUT I WILL PUT MY FEAR IN THEIR HEARTS, THAT THEY SHALL NOT DEPART FROM ME" (Jer. xxxii. 40).

Miss Winslow says :

"There had been quite a revival in one of our large schools among the little ones, many of whom hoped they had found Jesus, and were very happy. They loved to come to the prayer meetings which we held after school, and they loved to join in the sweet hymns and listen to the stories of His wonderful love; and they loved to tell their little companions and friends of their new-found Saviour.

"One day the teacher who presided at the meeting brought a little blue book in her hand, in which she asked them to sign their names, after reading what she had written on the first page. It was as follows :

" 'WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, HOPE THAT WE HAVE FOUND JESUS TO BE OUR PRECIOUS SAVIOUR; AND WE PROMISE, BY HIS HELP, TO LIVE AS HIS LOVING CHILDREN AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS ALL OUR LIVES.'

"Many of the children signed their names; but when it came to Ella's turn she said : 'I am afraid to sign that. It would be so dreadfully wicked to do anything wrong afterward, or to forget. And, besides, I am not sure that I am a Christian, and I do not dare tell a lie'

"The teacher explained that this was a covenant which only expressed a hope and a trust in the power of Jesus to enable us to keep our promises; that it would indeed be a dreadful thing to forget or turn back again, but that Jesus would not let her do so if she trusted in Him. So at length, with many misgivings, Ella signed her name in the book; and soon after the meeting closed and the school broke up for the vacation. The scholars were all scattered abroad, and I fear many of them forgot all about the meetings, but Ella did not.

"When the next term began, she came at once to her teacher and said: 'I am so glad I signed that covenant! I do not know how I should have got along without it. All summer, when I felt like doing wrong, something seemed to whisper in my ears, 'remember the covenant,' and I couldn't do it. When I was in a hurry and likely to forget my prayers and my Bible, I would suddenly think, there is my promise to be a faithful servant of Jesus, I can't be unfaithful to Him. When others would laugh at me and try to make me forget all about last winter, and give up trying to be a Christian, I couldn't forget that my name was down among the others, and I did not dare to turn back from following Jesus. I wouldn't not have signed it for the world.'

"Don't you see how it was? She had entered into covenant with the Lord, and He was keeping His part of the covenant by not letting her forget, or fall into sin."

During the past seven years I have presented the above covenant in all the places in which I have laboured.

In many places only about half the number sign it, which afterwards are examined and join the churches.

This shows that some are deterred from signing it, who afterwards come to the conclusion that they have been regenerated.

One advantage of the covenant is, that some who, for one reason or another, are discouraged from connecting themselves with the Church, are, by signing it, led to feel that they are COMMITTED, so that they *must not* go back.

I have received many letters from those, young and old, who, with little Ella, have rejoiced in the steps she took.

HOUSE OF REFUGE.

During the revival in Rochester, in 1869, we held a number of meetings in the House of Refuge. The Rev. Dr. C. P. Bush wrote as follows:

"The most remarkable feature of this revival is that which has manifested itself in our House of Refuge. Here are three hundred and eighty boys, none over sixteen years

of age, but many of them already old in crime. But, fortunately, the superintendent, Mr. Carpenter, is a religious man, and knows that the best way to reform these vicious boys is to get them to be Christians.

“He brought some of them two or three times to Mr. H——’s meetings. They came up first only for the sake of the ride, and to gratify their natural curiosity. But soon some were interested, and they carried the fires kindled in their own breasts back to the institution itself. The flames spread rapidly. The boys are now holding meetings daily among themselves. It was our privilege to attend one of these gatherings. It was held at 11 A.M., the time of play; but instead of being out at their sports, a hundred and fifty of the boys came together of their own accord.

“This was one of the most remarkable meetings which it was ever our privilege to attend. Fourteen of those boys stood up and spoke for Christ, expressing hope in His mercy, and exhorting their companions most fervently and touchingly to come and trust in the same Saviour. Five of them offered prayer, no one being called on by name save the last; all volunteering, speaking readily and rapidly, losing no time by waiting one for another, and speaking and praying with a fluency and propriety which could not be accounted for except by supposing them specially taught by the Spirit.

“And when the meeting was near closing, those who were indulging hope were requested to stand up. Seventy were immediately on their feet. Next, all those who desired to be Christians and wished others to pray for them were requested to rise, and some thirty or forty more arose. The superintendent then called upon one of the older boys to offer the closing prayer, especially for those who had just said, ‘Pray for us.’ It certainly seemed as

though that boy was taught of the Spirit, his prayer was so tender, so appropriate. We afterwards learned that he was a poor cripple, made such for life by the cruelty of a step-father, who showed his parental tenderness by kicking the boy into the street and breaking his hip-bone. We were also told that many of those now indulging hope in Christ were among the worst boys of the institution. One had tried several times to fire the buildings. Some have since confessed fearful crimes, which they had before concealed. Some also who spoke and prayed were very young, not more than ten or twelve years of age.

"We need hardly add, that a great change has come over the entire institution. It is now truly a reformatory. It is much more easily managed than it was. And it is pleasant to think how much better it will be for those boys when they come out of that place, that God has met them there and made them new creatures; how much better also for society, that they are truly reformed, and prepared to become good citizens, rather than greater adepts in crime."

JACKSONVILLE INSTITUTION FOR DEAF AND DUMB.

A work somewhat similar to that in Rochester was witnessed in the Jacksonville (Illinois) Institution for Deaf and Dumb, presided over by Dr. Gillett, who was among the select number of those who were chiefly instrumental in introducing the international S. S. Lesson Series.

My heart was deeply moved as I witnessed numbers of those mutes coming to Christ.

I received one day thirty or forty letters from them. Though I had spoken through an interpreter, I found they had perfectly understood all I had said.

I was quite astonished to find that a number of them had been in THE HABIT OF SWEARING, but they seemed fully to repent of it.

One of them by the name of Willie says :

"I am sorry for my sins ; I have been a wicked, bad boy ; but I think now Jesus has washed my heart clean, and I will trust and work for Him until I die."

Another says in her letter :

"I feel very badly for my sins ; but now I love Jesus, who died on the cross for me.

"I pray to God that I may love and work for Him as long as I live.

"I love the dear Jesus because He died on the cruel cross for me."

A third says :

"I was a very bad boy and wicked until April 21, 1874 ; now I have confessed my sins. I want to serve Him, and go to heaven when I die. I used to pray, but I was without faith. I have faith now, and am happy, and will serve God until I die, then I will go to be happy all the time. I am thirteen years old."

"IT'S YOUR LAST CHANCE."

Even young children, taught by the Spirit of God, are led to realize the danger of delay in the matter of their soul's salvation, as we see by the following letter from a child in Kansas :

"LAWRENCE, Dec. 12, 1863.

"The first time I went to the Children's Meeting I went out of curiosity ; but when you asked us to stop to the inquiry meeting my heart beat very loud ; but I succeeded in getting out of the church ; but before I got half-way home there was a still small voice said, 'Better go back ; it is your *last chance!*' but I did not heed the voice of conscience, and I went home. The next day I went again, and did the same. When I got home I prayed to God to give me a new heart, but He didn't seem to hear my prayer ; and then I said, I have been *so* wicked that God won't *hear* my prayers. The next day I went and stayed to the inquiry meeting. When you came and spoke to me you asked me if I

was willing to give up all to Jesus. I told you I was. Then you knelt and prayed with me, but I did not feel any better. I went home and prayed myself to sleep; and still I found no relief. I awoke before light the next morning, and began praying as before; but this time I asked Him if there was anything that I was not willing to give up, to tell me, and I would give it up. And He *did* tell me. Then I said, "Dear Lord, I give it all up; take me just as I am; it is all I can do. I give myself to Thee." And I was a new creature from that moment. I found Jesus then and there, for I was determined not to leave my room until I found Jesus. Oh! I did feel so happy. I went downstairs and I commenced to plead with my little brother to go to meeting with me. I wanted him to love Jesus. He would not go; but I shall try and bring him this afternoon, and I hope he may learn to love Christ, who died for him. I intend to live for Christ; and not only live, but work for Him.

"Your little friend, _____."

"CAN'T WE HAVE A PRAYER MEETING?"

A little girl went away into a neighbouring town where there was a revival. She attended the meetings, and heard the story of the cross, and gave herself to Jesus. When she returned home, she went to an old man who was a Christian, and said to him,

"Can't we have a prayer-meeting?"

"We?" said he; "I don't know of another Christian in this district."

"Well," said she, "you are a Christian and I am a Christian. Can't *we* have a prayer-meeting?"

"Well," said he, "we can say we, then."

They did have a prayer-meeting. The next day two or three more came. God answered their prayers, and now between twenty and thirty have found the Saviour.



CHAPTER IX.

TESTIMONIES FROM MINISTERS.

"THAT WHICH WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD DECLARE WE UNTO YOU,
THAT YE ALSO MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US."

1 John i. 5.

DURING the progress of this book I have received letters from distinguished ministers of different denominations concerning child conversion, which I insert in this chapter.

FROM REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"NIGHTINGALE LANE, CLAPHAM,

"LONDON, *Sept.* 15, 1877.

"Rev. E. P. HAMMOND:

"DEAR SIR,—My conviction is that OUR CONVERTS FROM AMONG CHILDREN ARE AMONG THE VERY BEST WE HAVE. I SHOULD JUDGE THEM TO HAVE BEEN MORE NUMEROUSLY GENUINE THAN ANY OTHER CLASS, MORE CONSTANT, AND IN THE LONG RUN MORE SOLID.

"I speak of those who are tried and kept under the wing of the Church.

"May you prosper evermore.

"Yours truly,

C. H. SPURGEON."

FROM REV. EZRA TINKER, A.M., B.D.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am happy to add my testimony in favour of early conversion. It is a subject that

should be more thoroughly discussed and more generally advocated. In our eagerness to reach adults we too often overlook the children. In the minds of some there is a kind of scepticism in respect to early conversion. While they admit the possibility, they give a toss of the head, which clearly indicates the state of their minds.

"In the fall of 1853, a series of revival meetings was held. The preaching was earnest, powerful, and touching. The house was crowded to its utmost capacity. A large number of persons made a profession of religion. In age they varied from fifteen to sixty.

"Those were the first revival meetings that I ever attended. I was ten years old. I was present at all those meetings, listened attentively to the preaching, was thrilled by the singing, was often in tears as I thought of my sins, went home only to toss all night long upon my bed, and rose in the morning to find myself no calmer.

"The day was spent in great anxiety. No one seemed to notice me or care for my soul, or, if they observed me, they evidently thought, 'He does not know what he is weeping about.' So I was left to myself.

"As no one noticed me, or tried to aid me, I was left to endure the most excruciating agony of mind. I suffered all that a sensitive childish mind could suffer. I knew not what to do. I knew not how to pray. I was in utter darkness. Meanwhile a brother and two sisters were converted.

"They saw my anxiety, and talked with me. They tried to take me through the A B C of Christian experience. But as they were comparatively young themselves, and only just initiated, they gave me but little light upon the subject. Immediately revival meetings were started in the Methodist Church, under the supervision of Rev. Walter Gerome, of precious memory, and of Rev. Daniel Cobb, of Norwich,

N.Y. It was during this last meeting, which continued till the month of May, that I was converted, and received the evidence of my adoption. I have enjoyed constant peace, although twenty-five years have passed away since I united with the Church

"Since I entered the ministry there have come under my observation some remarkable instances of early conversion, one of which I wish to narrate.

"During the most noted revival of religion that has taken place in the village of Goshen, Orange County, N.Y., in twenty-five years, a Mr. Charles A. Reeve and his wife were converted.

"They had a bright little boy six years of age. He came to the meetings with them. He became very serious, went to the altar, was converted. I baptized him, received him into the Church, and admitted him to the Lord's Supper. There was not a person converted who gave better evidence of it than little Franky Reeve.

"He was allowed to follow the bent of his own mind, and every step was taken of his own accord.

"He came out of his room one day, and said to his mother, 'Mamma, I am going to be baptized. I have been praying about it, and I feel that I ought to be.'

"He was manly and wise beyond his years, and he seemed to apprehend spiritual truths with great readiness.

"If children are properly nurtured, I believe they will continue steadfast in the faith. I gather them into classes by themselves, appoint a competent leader, generally a lady, and have her meet them at least once a week in class.

"I have such a class in my church in Yonkers. An estimable Christian lady is the leader. I appoint ladies leaders of children's classes, because they seem better adapted to instruct them, to sympathize with them, and to

hold them. He who gathers the children into the fold of Christ, will do invaluable service for the Master.

"Yours truly, EZRA TINKER."

FROM REV. RICHARD NEWTON, D.D.

Author of "Bible Wonders," "Bible Jewels," etc.

"MOUNT AIRY, PHILADELPHIA,

"September 24, 1877.

"Mrs. E. P. HAMMOND.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—In answer to your questions let me say :

"1st. *I do believe in the early conversion of children.*

"Let me quote here from a paper which I read before the Congress of the Protestant Episcopal Church, which met in Boston last fall. The paper appears in the printed report of that Congress.

"Who shall say at how early an age in the child's experience this blessed change (not vision) may not be effected?

"I speak with assured confidence here, because I can point to the cases of earnest Christian men respecting whom I *know* that they were converted in the cradle.

"Certain it is that the earliest unfoldings of their infant faculties were all under the manifest guidance and control of the Holy Ghost. Those most intimately concerned in their Christian nurture can say without a doubt that they never knew the time when, as children, they did not seem to be just what Christian children ought to be.

"In regard to the second question, "How young should children be received into the Church?" I do not think it possible to fix any uniform rule. It depends entirely on the training and character of the child, and the nature of its spiritual experience.

“ ‘I have in rare instances received children into the Church as young as ten years of age, and have never had reason to regret it.’

“ This answers your second and third questions both together.

“ Miss ——— has turned out to be a most exemplary and devoted Christian. I pray God that your husband may be the instrument of multitudes of such conversions in early life.

“ And wishing you and your husband God-speed in your work, I remain, very truly yours,

“ RICHARD NEWTON.”

FROM REV. A. A. BONAR, D.D.

“ GLASGOW, SCOTLAND,

September 18. 1877.

“ MY DEAR MR. HAMMOND,—We often, often remember you, though few letters have passed between us. My daughters and myself will never forget your visit and the time of blessing then, and they as well as myself send you most hearty salutations.

“ Dear brother, my thoughts on the subject of the conversion of children are the same as when I wrote that tract you refer to.* I think I agreed with you in almost everything but one, viz., expressing publicly an opinion on cases. It seems to me that we should be cautious in so doing; for children themselves mistake *feeling* for *faith*; how easy, then, for us who do not know the heart, to mistake in them a manifestation of feeling for evidence of faith.

* *The Conversion of Children.* By Dr. A. A. Bonar.

“But in the awakening which took place under your labours here, and in awakenings that have been given us since, the CASES OF YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN AS ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY AS ANY CASES WE HAVE HAD. If *conversion* be *God's work*, in which the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the soul, surely His work can take place in children as really as in the old ; for it is the young soul meeting with Christ in the one case, and the adult in the other.

“One day, about the time, or perhaps after the time, you were among us, in the vestry of my church, an old Christian woman, who had watched the work going on, came to me and said, ‘Sir, you will find many people speaking lightly of the young who come to Christ, as if there was nothing but feeling in their case ; but never mind what these people say. *I was converted* in the days of Dr. Kidd, of Aberdeen, *when I was but a child*, and two others of my age were converted at the same time ; and we have all three gone on to this day, following the Lamb.’

“The Lord blesses you amazingly. Surely you will need to ‘walk circumspectly,’ ‘sober, vigilant,’ for Satan will not fail to watch you and seek to injure you, that he may injure God's work through you. If the way be opened for your revisiting Scotland, many among us shall rejoice.

“Meanwhile, we pray for you, and will not cease. Pray for us still, dear brother.

“Yours truly, in Him, ‘Whose we are and whom we serve.’

ANDREW A. BONAR.”

FROM REV. WM. S. PLUMER, D.D.

Dr. Plumer, of the Theological Seminary, Columbia, South Carolina, in his article headed “YOUNG CHILDREN MAY BE TRULY PIOUS,” says :

"The revivals of modern times are full of interest. They are working out and bringing into prominence many great truths. Among them has been the appearance of a general and increased confidence in the possibility and reality of very early piety. Is it not true that many good men of former days doubted whether any child could be truly pious? And has not public sentiment, of late years, undergone a desirable change?

"The Rev. Moses Hoge, D.D., of Virginia, was a man greatly revered and beloved in his day. John Randolph, of Roanoke, pronounced him the most eloquent speaker he ever heard. He was the father of three eminent ministers of the Gospel, one of whom, Rev. James Hoge, D.D., of Columbus, Ohio, still lives to preach Christ. He also had several grandsons in the ministry. This venerable man, who died in 1822, often said to his friends, that he could not remember the time when he did not love the Lord Jesus Christ. Was not this much better than to be able to remember the time when he hated the Saviour, and despised His blood and righteousness?

"It requires no more intellect to love than to hate Christ, to please than to displease Him, to serve than to disobey Him. When Samuel J. Mills was yet a child, he was so overcome by a sense of his responsibilities, that he said, 'Oh, my mother, I wish I had never been born.' His mother did not dare to relieve his mind by any false view, and said, 'My son, you *are* born.' It would have required no more mind to have said with Halyburton, 'Oh, blessed be God that ever I was born!'

"The first and one of the happiest deaths I ever witnessed, was that of a full-grown young man who was preparing for the ministry. I learned from reliable sources the history of his religious character. Among other things, I remember that, when he was not *four* years old, he set

down his cup of bread-and-milk, and burst into tears. When his mother asked the cause, he answered, 'I am afraid I shall die, and not live any more.' Surely this child had then intellect enough to receive Christ as He is offered in the Gospel?

"More than *twenty-five* years ago, I attended the meeting of a Presbytery in the South. There was preaching for several days. On the Sabbath the Lord's Supper was administered, and some persons were added to the Church. Among them was a small boy. I had never seen so youthful a communicant. I was interested to know his subsequent history. The Monday after joining the Church, he went to school as usual. At play-time he went with the rest to engage in their usual exercises. But the old controversy between Cain and Abel revived with virulence. A number of the boys surrounded him, crying in bitter scorn, 'Oh, here is a little Christian!' But God was with His young servant, and enabled him to bear with meekness all these taunts. He held on his way, and is now at the head of one of the colleges of our country and a successful preacher of righteousness.

"The last visit paid me by Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander was for the purpose of preaching several days to my newly-formed Church in Baltimore. One of his sermons was on love to Christ, and was founded on 1 Cor. xvi. 22. He began his sermon by saying, 'I am in favour of early taking children to the house of God. When I was not more than four years old, I heard a minister preach on this text. From the time he began his sermon I was interested to know the meaning of *Anathema-Maranatha*—words which I had never heard before—and I watched till he gave the usual explanation, and I never forgot it.' Children know more than we are apt to think. I remember, too, that the excellent John Brown of Haddington says, 'About the

eighth year of my age, I happened in a crowd to push into the church at Abernethy on a sacrament Sabbath. Then it was common for all but intending communicants to be excluded. Before I was excluded, I heard one or two tables served by a minister, who spoke much to the commendation of Christ. This in a sweet and delightful manner captivated my young affections, and has since made me think that children should never be kept out of the church on such occasions.

“Let us begin early. Let us call young sinners to repentance. Let us commend Christ to their tender affections. Let us tell them they must hate sin and love Christ. ‘Feed My sheep’ is no more a binding command than ‘Feed My lambs.’

“Surely little children greatly need not only the comforts which a mother can give, but also those which the Saviour gives. I know not how it was with others, but I can safely say that I never needed the supports and consolations of true religion more than in my childhood, though I had the kindest of parents. Perhaps my feeble health and excited nerves subjected me to unusual sadness. However this may be, I find no persons in the world more ready to confess their need of special comfort than children. The Gospel has a balm for every wound, a cordial for every aching heart. Children need the sympathy of Jesus. If they ask for it, they get it as readily as their parents. Every child has sorrows which require the help of God, and are quite beyond the power of man to relieve. I believe the following statement is correct, and insert it as quite to my purpose :

“What do you do without a mother to tell all your troubles to ?” asked a child who had a mother, of one who had not, for her mother was dead.

“‘Before she died, mother told me to whom to go,’

answered the little orphan ; ' I go to the Lord Jesus ; He was mother's Friend, and He is mine.'

" ' Jesus Christ is up in the sky ; He is away off, and has a great many things to attend to in heaven. It is not likely He can stop to mind you.'

" ' I do not know anything about that,' said the orphan ; ' all I know is, *He says He will, and that's enough for me.*'

" The little orphan was right. Jesus Christ was once a little child. He remembers and knows how to minister to the sorrows of childhood as well as those of riper years. It is not six months since a little child, not three years old, when dying, said to its parents, ' Papa, mamma, don't cry ; I am going home.' Who can doubt that Christ is with such little sufferers ? Why should it be thought a thing incredible that the great Shepherd should be very tender and peculiarly near to His dear lambs ?

" It is sometimes said that the piety of children is apt to be very deficient in just views of the holiness of God. This may be so. But is not this lacking also in the piety of many adults ? Where is the score of professors, taken promiscuously in any church, whose piety did not, from the first, need great improvement in this respect ? Read the account of Phœbe Bartlett, given by the elder President Edwards, and where can you find an account of a first conversion, in which God in all His excellent character had greater prominence ? I know not of any.

" Others have thought that the piety of children was apt to be very deficient in the sense of the evil of sin. But read the life of James Laing, written by McCheyne, and tell me what man or woman ever seemed more truly to loathe sin in the inmost soul.

" Others suggest that children are very liable to self-deception respecting their own exercises of mind. This is true of persons of every age, and is a good reason for

caution and discrimination in all cases, but cannot justify a discouraging course of procedure towards the early religious impressions of children.

“Nor does it seem to me that more is to be made of the appearance of a desire in pious children to be free from needless and unreasonable restraints. In an important sense a pious child is to be regarded and treated still as a child, but it should not be placed under a system of *espionage* or *surveillance*. Indeed, no child should be dealt with unreasonably.

“In fine, I can sympathize with McCheyne when he says, ‘Jesus has reason to complain of us, that He can do no mighty work in our Sabbath-schools, because of our unbelief. Let us pray for the children. Let us labour for the children. Let us hope for the children.

“I trust a better day is dawning. One excellent and judicious brother of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, a few months since, received *forty* children into full communion on a profession of their faith. I trust others will have good cause for doing similar acts of love.

“It seems to me that a sober discussion of the subject of early piety cannot fail to be useful. It is interesting to almost every family that is not wholly given to worldliness.

“A gentleman of high standing in one of the churches of New York writes thus: ‘During the past year, our Church has been greatly blessed by the presence with us, as we believe, of the Holy Spirit. More than a hundred have been hopefully converted, of whom a goodly number were children, and considerably more than half members of the Sunday-school and Bible-classes. I think we have had some beautiful cases of early piety, which have afforded us examples of deep conviction of sin, and implicit trust in the simple Word of God, such as are not often seen in older

"I asked a child, 'How do you know that the Lord Jesus will receive you, if you have truly repented of sin and are trusting in Him alone for salvation?' 'Why, because He says so,' was the reply. I asked a boy who was speaking to the session of the delight he took in prayer, why he found it necessary to pray now, seeing he hoped his sins were forgiven, and he had resolved henceforth to be the Lord's. He looked up with a sorrowful expression, burst into tears, and said, 'Oh, I am so wicked, I could not get along *at all* without prayer.'

"Some of these children, by faithful and most judicious efforts in behalf of others, have been instrumental in doing much good. I may safely say to you that the most satisfactory cases, so far at least as their appearance on examination for the communion is concerned, have been those of children and quite young persons.'

"I believe the following statement is correct, though I cannot at present vouch for it. A little girl was not well; she said she was in pain. Her mother told her, 'I will give you some medicine, my dear, which will make you quite well to-morrow.' Her brother was present, and said, 'Oh, no, mamma, medicine *alone* will not make her well. When I was ill I took a great deal, but it did me no good until I *prayed to God to make me well*, and then I was better the very next morning, when I thanked God for making me better; and now I am quite well, and so will Ann be, if she prays to God.' Though this boy had not learned to limit the efficacy of prayer to things agreeable to God's will—and the recovery of sick children is not always so—yet he practically and firmly believed in the insufficiency of means without the Divine blessing.

"On the whole, so far as we have light on this subject, let us walk by it. Let us remember that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God in every generation ordains

strength. Let us exhort our offspring, and earnestly pray to God that to Him they may give the dew of their youth. 'Instead of the fathers shall be the children.' 'The child shall die a hundred years old.'

"Who can doubt that as the millennium approaches, much more when it shall actually come, the lambs will know the voice of the Good Shepherd, and will not follow a stranger.

"Should any pervert these thoughts to purposes of fanaticism, or anything inconsistent with the sobriety of the Gospel, the fault will be his own.

"LET US ALL PRAY AND LABOUR FOR THE EARLY CONVERSION OF CHILDREN."

FROM DR. F. H. HELMER.

"LOCKPORT, NEW YORK, *Sept. 22, 1877.*

"DEAR BROTHER,—I believe there are many more saved ones as the result of those meetings in 1869 than there were then thought to be, and many more than will ever be known in this world.

"Many who have since confessed Christ before men were young children then, and I well remember their glad and happy smiles of joy as the way of salvation was opened to them in so plain a manner that they could comprehend the truth. Many of those who have since united with the two churches (with which I am the most familiar), have come from the Sunday-schools, and many of these I remember as eager listeners to the truth as presented by you at that time. A very large number of children and youth united with our churches at that time, and although some have wandered, still the majority are firm, and true believers and workers in the vineyard. The children then converted are, as a rule, better workers than the adults,

and my observation leads me to believe this to be true everywhere.

“I am sure this is true of my own dear children, who, I believe, were converted at that time, and two of them you know were very young—Willie only four years old.

“Yours in Jesus,

“F. H. HELMER.”

REVIVAL AMONG THE LITTLE ONES.

By Rev. G. H. Morse.

“It came about on this wise. The teachers of our Sabbath-school met together to pray for and consult as to what more we could do for the spiritual welfare of the children and young people. It was decided to hold *class* prayer meetings. Each male teacher was to be responsible for the conducting of the meeting with his class, the superintendent being responsible for the conduct of the meetings of classes taught by female teachers.

“The meetings commenced in private houses ; but soon it became apparent that larger room must be sought, and we were obliged to go to our mission schoolroom. From the first meeting religious interest was manifested ; the children were deeply affected and in tears.

“Dr. Todd’s ‘Lectures to Children’ were read to them, remarks made upon the subject thus introduced, prayers offered interspersed with singing. Soon the inquiry arose from many hearts, What must I do to be saved ? And after each meeting personal conversation was had with those who wished it. Our Sabbath service was followed by prayer and inquiry meetings. A deep and quiet interest pervaded each session of the school. Conversions were frequent, till soon twenty-five were rejoicing in a new-found Saviour.

"Beside the class prayer meeting, the teachers' prayer meeting was kept up during the religious interest, and several appointed *special* seasons of prayer, each agreeing to be in his closet at a certain hour each day, pouring out their hearts to God for each individual member of their classes, expressed by name. The children, also, deeply pervaded by the Holy Spirit's influence, of their own accord met together, and prayed for their classes, teachers, and the unconverted members of the school; spending a half hour thus, at some private house, on Sabbath afternoon before the session of the school; meeting also on Wednesday afternoon for the same purpose.

"An incident connected with this meeting illustrates the faith of the children. They were under ten years of age. The Sabbath after their first meeting one of them said to her teacher.

"We had a little prayer meeting last week."

"Had you?" said the teacher. "Who was there?"

"The little girl mentioned the names of two schoolmates.

"Was that all?" asked the teacher.

"No," was the quick reply; "there was one more."

"And who was that?" asked the teacher.

"JESUS," said the child.

"But," said the teacher, "how do you know Jesus was there?"

"Because," she replied, "He has said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them,' and we *felt* He was there."

"The genuineness of the conversion which took place became apparent, not only in their countenances and words, but in little, though touching acts of kindness towards each other at school, and in a very marked change in their behaviour at home, to which their parents bore witness. While this was a mission school, most of these converts

subsequently connected themselves, we believe, with some church.

“The measures adopted to bring about this religious interest were such as might be made practicable in Sabbath-schools where there are also church privileges. The class prayer meeting, not directly after the Methodist order, though that is good, may become a helpful aid to the teacher in making the spiritual application of the truths taught on the Sabbath. Try it, teacher. Try it, superintendent.”

FROM PRESIDENT P. A. CHADBOURNE.

“WILLIAMS COLLEGE, Sept. 29, 1877.

“MY DEAR BROTHER HAMMOND,—I doubt not the Great Master is still saying to His disciples, ‘Suffer little children to come unto Me.’ How young children may be converted no one can tell; but we may be sure that it is not the will of our Heavenly Father, that the child should walk a single hour in conscious rebellion against Him. That Spirit that maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, even that blessed Spirit that leads into all truth, can lead the little child to the Saviour, long before it can understand the doctrines of the Bible as set forth in Church creeds or as explained by loving lips. The child can have, in a large degree, that blessed experience which every Christian must have in some measure, of doing His will and then knowing of the doctrine. I have full faith in the conversion of very young children. The conversion can be shown only by subsequent fruits and by growth in the Christian life as the intellectual life is developed. It is a blessed thing to have the early years confessedly given to Christ, to have the child feel the power of the divine life increasing as all the powers of body and

mind increase, bringing them into sweet subjection to God's holy law, and into willing, joyful service in the Redeemer's kingdom.—Very truly, your friend and brother,

"P. A. CHADBOURNE."

REV. DR. PEASE,

who laboured for several years as an evangelist in New England, gives us his testimony with regard to the perseverance in a course of piety, of children converted in revivals about thirty-five years ago, as follows :

"ROCKVILLE, CONNECTICUT, *Sept. 12, 1877.*

"DEAR BROTHER,—At your request I will state the result of my observation respecting perseverance in piety, of persons converted in early childhood.

"I frequently saw in seasons of revival numerous cases of children, of six years of age and upwards, giving evidence of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, as distinct and clear as in the case of those in adult years.

"After careful observation, I have found cases of defection from a correct religious life as infrequent among children as among those converted at a later period of life.

"A case in illustration.

"In my pastoral visits, I found a mother with three daughters, the eldest of whom was not over nine years of age. Had conversation with the mother and children, chiefly with the eldest.

"After leaving the house, as afterwards the mother informed me, the second daughter said, 'Mother, I don't think our pastor thought that I was old enough to become a Christian, as he didn't say anything to me. But I think I can give my heart to Jesus, and become a Christian as well as my older sister.' She did give her heart to the Saviour, as well as her sister, and both gave equally satisfactory evidence of true conversion to God."

"G. PEASE"

FROM REV. J. B. SHAW, D.D.

“ROCHESTER, Oct. 2, 1877.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—I believe that children may and should grow up in the love and fear of the Lord. Not only that they may be converted *early*, but so *early* as not to know when the change takes place.

“Never yet in all my ministry have I kept a little child waiting on the doorstep of the Church, if he gave me any satisfactory evidence that he loved the Saviour, and was trusting in Him; and I believe it is a growing conviction, that those are the best Christians who come EARLIEST TO THE LORD AND EARLIEST INTO THE CHURCH.

“And I believe still further, that it is the UNBELIEF OF THE CHURCH which is keeping so many of these dear ones away from Christ.

“It is the old scene over again; instead of bringing little children to the Saviour that He may take them up in His arms, and put His hands upon them, and bless them, we chide those who are trying to do it, as if a child could be too young to receive the Lord’s blessing.

“I believe in the Master. I believe also in the work of His servant—my dear friend and brother, E. P. H.

“Yours,

“JAMES B. SHAW.”

FROM MR. WM. REYNOLDS.

“PEORIA, ILLINOIS, Sept. 29, 1877.

“DEAR BROTHER,—More than eleven years have passed since you laboured here. A large number of children professed conversion at that time. Some of them are in the world, not supporting their profession by their works. Others have grown up into *strong, earnest Christians, good*

workers in the Church and Sunday-school. The difference is, in the attention they received after professing Christ.

"Those who united with churches who believe in conversion in childhood, and looked after them, instructing them in the doctrines of God's Word, organizing them into bands of Christian workers, showing them *how* to work, etc., are to-day living witnesses of the truth of their profession. Others who were neglected went back to the world.

"We want to use common sense in this matter of Christian training. I have as much confidence in the conversion of children as adults, and I think God's Word supports us in this opinion.

"Glad to hear from you. God bless you in your work everywhere, and all the time is my prayer.

"Yours,

"WM. REYNOLDS."

I am not surprised at what Mr. Reynolds writes about those children not holding out, who were neglected after professing conversion.—E. P. H.

FROM REV. E. F. HATFIELD, D.D.

"NEW YORK, October 13, 1877.

"Rev. E. P. HAMMOND.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I rejoice greatly that God has put it into your heart to seek so faithfully the conversion of the rising generation, in the days of their childhood and early youth. And I rejoice still more in the fact that God has crowned your labours in this direction with such remarkable success. May the great Head of the Church spare you

long, and give you still more abundant grace, to gather the little ones into the fold of the Good Shepherd.

“‘Why should it be thought a thing incredible’ that little children should be made the subjects of renewing and saving grace ; that they should intelligently apprehend, and effectually receive, the simple truths of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ‘Is anything too hard for the Lord?’ said a worthy member of my Church on one occasion, when I was talking with him about several cases of conversion that had recently taken place among the children of the congregation. ‘Too hard!’ I replied. ‘Why, my dear brother, what a mistake ; it is in the case only of the full-grown sinner, whose habits of disobedience and unbelief have been confirmed by constant and long-continued repetition, that such a question is appropriate. In the case of the simple-hearted child and the ingenuous youth, it is altogether out of place.’

“The instances of such conversion are quite too numerous at the present day, and too well assured, to be called in question. In the gracious visitations of the Spirit with which it has pleased God so abundantly of late to bless the churches of Great Britain and America, quite a large number of little ones have been hopefully converted, and are now bringing forth the appropriate fruits of the Spirit. Nor is this a ‘new thing under the sun.’ The history of the Church, in almost every age, furnishes ample testimony to the practicability and genuineness of early conversion.

“The venerable divine, whose pastoral ministrations I enjoyed in my younger years, and whose most useful life was prolonged more than fourscore years, was converted in the eleventh year of his age. So he told me, fifty years ago, when, with many other children of a tender age, I was in attendance on one of his inquiry meetings. My own apprehensions of the guilt of sin and of the need of salvation, as

well as of the atonement made for sin, were, as I distinctly remember, both clear and scriptural. The beloved pastor of one of our city churches was brought under conviction of sin, as he once told me, at seven years of age, and after a considerable struggle with unbelief, he was presently converted and admitted to the fellowship of the Church. Two, at least, of my own beloved children gave abundant evidence of their living 'in the fold' before they had completed their tenth year. A ministry of nearly half a century has furnished me with numerous similar examples.

"That such cases may be indefinitely multiplied, and that all who love the Lord Jesus Christ may be led to expect, and pray, and labour, for the early conversion of the little ones, is the prayer of

"Yours in the Lord Jesus,

"EDWIN F. HATFIELD."

FROM REV. I. N. CARMAN,

Pastor of the North Baptist Church, Indianapolis.

"INDIANAPOLIS, Oct. 18, 1877.

"Rev. E. P. HAMMOND.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad to hear of your proposed work on the 'Conversion of Children.' I have four children who gave clear evidence of conversion at the ages of eight, six, ten, and nine years. Very speedily they asked, every one of them, the privilege of Church membership, and received it. As I did not think their physical welfare likely to be furthered at their birth by *living in the barn* instead of my house, I did not favour any corresponding policy at their second birth. I may thankfully testify that from six to twelve years' experience since these children started in Christian and Church life, satisfies me more and more continually, that ordinarily the conversion of little children may

not only be properly laboured for, prayed for, and confidently expected, but that, with *due home and Church training*, such converts glorify God and bless the world greatly more than do those converted at mature age. Indeed, I have been led to seriously question whether it is not a censurable presumption to claim the promise 'he will not depart from it,' for the child who is but trained *for* instead of *in* the 'way he should go.' Till my child is *in Christ*, '*the Way*,' I dare not hope to train him in the way he should go.

"I may add that a good deal of pastoral experience in *receiving children into the Church on their profession of Christ*, and afterwards trying to train them, strengthens my belief not only in the wisdom, but the urgent necessity of such additions to our churches. But, consistently with this, I make *personal* care of my young people's meetings a marked specialty of my ministry.

"But you want *facts* 'bearing on these points,' not theories.

"It is *a fact* that we had the influence of your book, 'Children in Jesus,' in our household in the infancy of my children. It is *a fact* that the youngest boy I ever received into the Church seemed called to the ministry at once, and became a strong and steadfast helper of his pastor while growing up.

"It is *a fact* that the youngest little girl I ever so received testified to having loved Jesus from the time she *first knew He died for her*, and lives loving Him still. God bless you and your book!

"In Gospel bonds,

L. N. CARMAN."

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